

IN

THE

VELDT

HARLEY

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

AND NEW YORK, 15 EAST 16th STREET

1894

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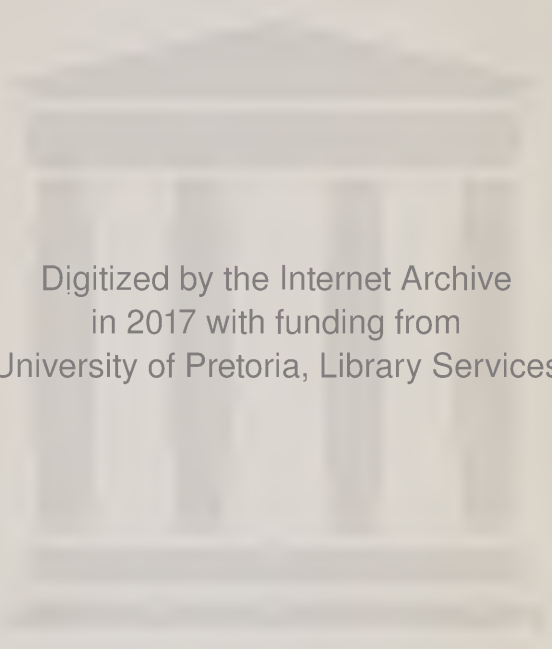
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TO
LEANDER STARR JAMESON, M.D.,

ADMINISTRATOR OF MASHONALAND AND MATABELELAND,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS

Dedicated.

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF THE ESTEEM AND REGARD

IN WHICH HE IS HELD

BY HIS FRIEND THE AUTHOR.

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A MASHONALAND ROMANCE.

“Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?”

—*As You Like It.*

ONE of the most independent and sturdy of the old, roving, ever-trekking Boer stock was Piet Jacobs. Smoke rising from a neighbour's chimney within ten miles of him; a troop of cattle, not his own, grazing too near; the tyranny of officialdom in the shape of a field-cornet dropping in once a year or so on some electoral or other Government business—all made him feel that the world was getting crowded, and that the dignity of true patriarchal existence demanded less bustle and confusion. Rates, taxes and elections—what were they, forsooth, but the silly frippery of an effeminate generation? Was the world getting too small? Must a man be compelled to live within half a day's journey of his neighbour? The thought was too stifling. He and his wife, his sons and his daughters, his flocks and herds, his waggon and trek oxen, must away out of this throng, away over the Vaal, over the Limpopo to some veldt where a man still might live in peace on the game he killed, feed his cattle where he listed, have—as the Lord decreed—black slaves for servants, and worship God undisturbed in the solitude of a land which was unmarred by beacons, and knew no

boundaries. And so, years before chartered pioneers had cut roads, built forts, and hoisted that emblem of the thrusting multitude, the British flag, old Piet Jacobs, accompanied by his family, had, after months of steady hasteless trekking, taken up his abode, with his house on wheels, in the eastern portion of Mashonaland. Here, at last, was the home he sought; here, of an evening, could a man smoke his pipe quietly.

“Away—away from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer’s haunt, by the buffalo’s glen;
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartebeeste graze,
And the kudu and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o’erhung with wild vine;
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.”

Powder, lead, rifles, and a bible, the Jacobs family had brought with them. For the rest, it lay around them. The game supplied meat and clothing: vegetables grew readily. What more they might occasionally require, a load of ivory and skins, every few years or so, to the nearest trader, would abundantly obtain. Wealth! Was not this wealth? It seemed so to old Piet Jacobs.

The time passed by in solemn peaceful isolation. The children grew in years and numbers; and Piet, when some of his sons were old enough to accompany him, made longer expeditions, taking the waggon to convey stores and bring back the ivory. He built a house, in which his wife and children remained with

one of the elder boys and an old native servant during the winter trips. At long intervals parties of elephant hunters would camp for a time in the neighbourhood, and they were the only Europeans who visited the Dutchman's home. On these occasions Kaatje, the eldest daughter, would prepare the coffee and offer the strangers welcome. For old Piet liked the hunters—men who come and go; it was the people who come, as it were, and live in the same parish he hated. He sometimes joined a hunting party, and was famed among the regular hunters for his skill and courage.

A curious race are the African elephant hunters; of all nationalities and all grades of life do they come. A French nobleman or a Scottish peasant—it matters not; ivory levels all ranks; and he is the best man who is longest in the wind and coolest in the hour of danger. Among those who had been on more than one occasion a visitor at old Jacobs' home, and one of a party which Piet had joined, was Bob Stewart, a stolid Scotchman—of uncertain age and the most indomitable courage. In fact, Hartley, the king of elephant hunters, is once stated to have declined to join a hunting party if Bob became one of them, on the ground that Bob did not know what danger meant. And many were the stories told round the camp fire of his utter indifference and stolidity in the face of danger.

It was related how, on one occasion when he and another hunter, called Parker, were out elephant shooting together, an accident occurred to Parker's rifle, an old muzzle-loading elephant gun. The bullet stuck in loading, and, in endeavouring to ram it down, Parker broke his ramrod, and was completely *hors-de-combat*.

They were riding on the flank of a troop of elephants, and Parker had severely wounded an old bull, with magnificent tusks, which he was following up. They had already had a long chase and killed several elephants, and Bob had just dismounted, and was standing by one of his prizes. Parker rode up to him, and shouted to him to mount his horse and give the retreating bull another shot. Bob simply replied, in an accent you might cut with a knife : " Mon, ah canna, ma harse es done."

"Then give me your gun, Bob;" said Parker, and snatching it from him, he followed the bull. The old bull had in the meantime made tracks for some high dense bush, and before Parker could get up to him he had burst into the thicket. At no time is an elephant so dangerous as when wounded and in the bush. This Parker knew well; but the tusks were extremely fine, and he had set his heart on having them. Where the elephant had entered was a well-defined track of broken trees and brushwood; and, thrusting his spurs into his now tired horse, Parker proceeded to follow on his trail. Unfortunately, the wind was blowing in the direction the elephant had taken; and this (as an elephant's keenest sense is his smell) was an additional danger. Parker picked his way as cautiously as he could on his horse. The bush got thicker as he went on. He had penetrated in this manner about two hundred yards, when suddenly, without a moment's warning, he heard the terrific screaming sound which an elephant makes when he is going to charge; and looking a little to the right of the track he was following, from whence the sound came, he saw the elevated trunk and ears of the old bull, in the very act of charging. His horse had swerved on

hearing the scream ; and feeling there was not a second to lose if he wished to save his life, Parker turned to gallop, as best he could, down the only path which was open to him—the track he had followed into the bush. But, lo ! right across the track in front of him sat Bob Stewart on his horse. “ Out of the way, Bob, for God’s sake ! The elephant’s going to charge ! ”

“ Mon, ah canna, ma harse es done,” replied Bob in precisely the same imperturbable tone he had used before. Parker thought his last moment had come : there was a rush and a crash, and the huge brute passed within a few yards of them as he tore off through the bush. Either he had only just caught wind of and not seen them, or he had been put off his stroke by the imperturbable Bob. But be that as it may, the chase was abandoned ; they rode slowly out of the bush and back towards the camp. For an hour neither spoke. When Bob at length said :

“ Mon, ma spurs must be fou o’ blood, ave spurred ma horse just awfu’.”

Parker looked down at Bob’s heels. “ You damned fool, Bob, you’ve got no spurs on.”

This, and similar incidents, had served to establish for Bob his peculiar reputation, and to furnish many a hunters’ mess seated round the camp fire with a subject for after-dinner conversation and chaff. Bob, a true Scotchman, failed to see anything for comment or joking at in his own doings.

But one thing, a delicate subtle thing, had penetrated the weather-worn pachydermatous hide of the sturdy Scotchman ; and that was the admiring glance occasionally cast upon him by the fair Kaatje. This affected the mighty hunter as no elephant scream or lion’s glare had ever done, and before it he had for the first time in his

life experienced a sort of quivering emotion. Of late especially the seizures had been severe; and Bob, a man of action and few words, determined to suffer no longer—Kaatje must be wooed and won. Bob was encamped in the neighbourhood, the patriarchal Jacobs was away on a hunting expedition; could circumstances be more auspicious? The game must be stalked and secured. But never had this heroic hunter felt less confidence in his prowess or more uncertainty as to his success.

Ladies not of sable hue were scarce in Mashonaland; and, flattered by the compliments of many hunters, Kaatje rated herself none too cheaply. Old Piet's daughter was a woman whom any man might be proud to marry, or at all events old Piet's daughter in her simple veldt-bred innocence believed so. And good luck to Kaatje, hers, at least, was not the misfortune to be born in a country, where, according to a certain sporting younger son of a noble lord, a sometime elephant hunter, "you really, you know, had to keep them off with an umbrella".

Poor Bob, the difficulties he had to overcome were many—indeed, a heavy handicap for any man; not only did he know little or no Dutch, but he laboured under the further disadvantage of being unable to speak his own language "as she is spoke," or even as she was usually spoke, by visitors to the Jacobs family. His conversation with Kaatje had consequently been of the most limited character, touching principally on coffee.

The rains had fallen some months before the Mashonaland season was on. Calm, cool, cloudless nights succeeded still sunny days. The moon, on a particular evening selected by the now desperate Bob, was nearly at her full, and shed soft splendour on the

rough home of the hardy old Dutchman. The home was situated near the foot of a small kloof; and as Bob with a new puggaree round his hat wended his way along the kloof side, the deep shadows cast by the bush lay like black gulfs in his path. For sentiment had somehow unhinged the stolid Bob, and he noticed these things.

As he neared the home, he could see Kaatje sitting on the doorstep in the moonlight, looking out on the beauty of the night.

Walking up and saying "good evening" he sat gravely down beside her. The children and Mrs. Jacobs were inside. The cat, an old retainer, who had followed them in their wanderings, sat dozing on the open window ledge. Save for the steady monotonous croaking of a frog by the stream, and the occasional weird wailing cry of the wild dog on the trail of a koodoo, not a sound was stirring. Over all the surrounding bush and veldt, lay, like a transparent sea, the witching light of the tropical moon.

"In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew:
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismayed away."

And even now might Bob and Kaatje have seen a shadow—a sinister shadow—of a tiger crouched beneath a mimosa bush within a few yards of the window, with hungry gleaming eyes fixed on the sleeping cat, had they not been too intent on each other's conversation.

Bob, in bad Dutch and worse English, was approaching, as fast as tremulous emotion would allow, the question, the mere consideration of which had destroyed his peace and digestion for some weeks past, when suddenly there was a soft whirring sound, followed by a crash, as the tiger sprang through the air, and missing the cat

swept onwards through the open window against the table in the room beyond. Looking behind them, Bob and Kaatje could discern by the light of a dim candle burning in the corner of the room the figure of the bewildered brute standing by the fallen table. They sprang to their feet ; and Bob felt really revived, and regained his equilibrium, as he realised the position of affairs.

For a moment the tiger hesitated ; and then, seeing an open door leading into semi-darkness beyond him, he glided swiftly into the next room. This happened to be the kitchen, in which were Mrs. Jacobs and several of the children ; and here was he greeted with such a chorus of yells that, turning tail, he rushed back, and this time disappeared into a small bedroom, in which a little curly-headed Jacobs of some five summers was sleeping in a bed against the wall. Beneath this bed the bewildered brute took refuge. In the meantime Bob had taken down a huge elephant gun, ready loaded for emergencies. He got Mrs. Jacobs and the children back into the kitchen and fastened the door. To Kaatje, who, realising her little brother's danger, remained quiet, he gave the candle. They then together approached the bedroom, and saw the tiger beneath the bed on which the boy was sleeping peacefully. For a moment Bob hesitated ; he saw that by firing he could kill the tiger, and that without danger of wounding the boy. But an elephant gun, fired in a small room, with a report like a cannon—what would be the effect on the little chap sleeping there? The tiger glared on them with all his teeth showing, as Kaatje, standing behind Bob, held up the flickering candle. In great perplexity, Bob looked round and caught sight of an assegai leaning against the wall.

To waken the child was more dangerous than to fire, the slightest movement of the bed on his part might be resented by the tiger as an attack, and result in instant death.

"Ef ah fire," said Bob, "ah'll maybe scare the wee bairn oot of his wuts; ah'll just put doon the gun and tak' this assegai; hold you the candle steady, Miss Kaatje."

And Bob put down the gun and took up the assegai; he felt it, it seemed strong and good; if he could stab the tiger through the heart it would do as well as three ounces of lead. Without turning a hair, and as cool as when his "horse was done," Bob approached the bed. Getting close up he thrust at the tiger's heart. The point of the assegai struck on the tiger's ribs; and, as Bob afterwards described it, "turned round and looked at him." It was of native manufacture, and the iron was soft. The tiger gave one roar and a bound; knocking the candle out of Kaatje's hand, and leaving them in darkness, he landed once more in the front room. Bob, with the crooked assegai in his hand, rushed after him, and shutting the door on Kaatje and her little brother, was alone with the now desperate brute. The front door had got closed in the scrimmage; the window was small and the room too dark to enable Bob to make out the exact whereabouts of his foe; but he could hear him tearing round the room and knocking over the furniture as he sprang against the walls in his efforts to escape.

Bob, standing in the middle of the room, straightened out the assegai, and then, seized with one of those fits of absolute recklessness for which he was half-loved and half-laughed at and altogether famous, he proceeded to pursue his enemy in the darkness, thrusting whenever he

thought he was near enough, until at last the tiger made another bound and passed out, as he had entered, through the window.

Bishop Day Scott happened to be on one of his tours through the country at the time ; and at a little trading station, two hundred miles to the south, a month after the above incident, he officiated at the nuptials of Bob and Kaatje.

CHORISTER,

FAVOURITE FOR THE KIMBERLEY AUTUMN HANDICAP.

“ In their own generation the wise may sneer,
They hold our sport in derision ;
Perchance to sophist or sage or seer
Was allotted a graver vision.
Yet if man of all the Creator planned
His noblest work is reckoned,
Of the works of His hand, by sea or land,
The horse may at least rank second.

“ Did they quail, those steeds of the squadrons' light,
Did they flinch from the battle's roar,
When they burst on the guns of the Muscovite,
By the echoing Black Sea shore ?
On ! on ! to the cannon's mouth they stride,
With never a swerve or a shy,
Oh ! the minutes of yonder maddening ride,
Long years of pleasure outvie !

“ The flag is lowered. ‘ They're off ! ’ ‘ They come ! ’
The squadron is sweeping on ;
A sway in the crowd—a murmuring hum :
‘ They're here ! ’ ‘ They're past ! ’ ‘ They're gone ! ’
They come with the rush of the southern surf,
On the bar of the storm-girt bay ;
And like muffled drums on the sounding turf,
Their hoof-strokes echo away.”

—*Lindsay Gordon.*

The hot South African summer was already on the wane : the worst was over ; and in the early morning the weather was cool, bracing, and delightful—just the sort of morning to tempt one to a leisurely ride down to the racecourse before breakfast, where the racehorses, imported and colonial-born, were doing their morning

gallops, and getting fitter every day for the Autumn Meeting, which was to take place the following month.

It was to be a great meeting this year: two or three cracks had been imported, bought at high figures in England; and the entries for all the races exceeded those of any previous meeting. The Stock Market was booming; men were in a gambling mood, and many were the books being made on the Kimberley Autumn Handicap. This was the big race of the meeting; and the stakes, £1000, were the best ever offered at any race hitherto held in South Africa.

What a passion with the British people has horse-racing become in this nineteenth century! It matters not one whit whether a man knows one end of a horse from the other, still will he to the racecourse and see the race; or, if not that, at least the backs of others who see the race. If unable to get away to the races himself, he follows with eager interest the sporting news in the daily paper, and stakes some of his hard-earned savings on an outsider. And yet with it all, this is no mere modern craze: the penny post and telegraph wires have made participation in some shape or form more general; but the passion itself is old and deep-rooted in human nature.

Over two thousand years ago, when Athens was in the zenith of her glory, the Athenian youth seem to have been as addicted to horses and chariot racing as some of the gilded and ungilded of our day are to flat racing. And if Professor Goldwin Smith would plough up the racecourse to-day, Aristophanes did not refrain from trying what satire could do with this misguided section of mankind in his time. In "*The Clouds*" he described a young scapegrace, Pheidippides—whose very name, after the fashion of the day, is partially derived from the Greek

word for a horse—whose extravagance has been the ruin of his father.

The following is Lucas Collins's excellent translation of the scene between father and son :—

STREPSIADES (*the father, yawning in bed*).

And there's that hopeful son of mine can sleep
Sound as a top, the whole night long, rolled up
Like a great sausage there, in five thick blankets !
Well, I suppose I'd as well put my head
Under the clothes and try to get a snooze.
I can't. I can't get to sleep ! There are things biting me—
I mean the bills, the stable expenses, and the debts
Run up for me by that precious son of mine.
And he—oh, he lives like a gentleman,
Keeps his fine horses, drives his curricule—
Is dreaming of them now, no doubt—while I lie vexing,
Knowing next month those notes of hand come due
With interest mounting up.

(*Calls to his slave without*).

Boy ! bring a lamp ;

Bring me my pocket book, that I may see
How my account stands, and just cast them up.
Let's see now.—First, here's Prasias, fifty pounds.
Now, what's that for ? When did I borrow that ?
Ah ! when I bought that grey. Oh dear, oh dear !
I shall grow grey enough if this goes on.

PHEIDIPPIDES (*son, talking in his sleep*).

That's not fair, Philo ! Keep your own side of the course !

STR. Ay, there he goes ! That's what is ruining me ;
He's always racing, even in his dreams.

PH. (*still asleep*.) How many times round do the war-
chariots go ?

STR. You make your old father's head go round, you do.
But let me see what stands here next to Prasias ?
Twelve pounds to Amyntas—for a car and wheels.

PH. There ! give that horse a roll, and take him home.

STR. You'll roll me out of house and home, young man !
I've judgment debts against me, and the rest of them
Swear they'll proceed.

Pheidippides finally awakes, and a stormy scene ensues, in which his father abjures him to "cut the turf" and study philosophy :—

PH. (*after a little hesitation.*) No, I can't do it.
Studying hard, you see,
Spoils the complexion.

STR. Then, sir, henceforth I swear, so help me Ceres,
I won't maintain you—you, nor your bays, nor your chestnuts.
Go to the dogs—or anywhere—out of my house.

But, Aristophanes and Professor Goldwin Smith notwithstanding, racing continues. The sport appeals to a certain side of human nature ; and whether it be a right side, a wrong side, or a little of both, suffice it that the South African is no exception. He loves a race as well as any of his brothers over sea. In Kimberley especially, where the digger knows full well the extremes of fortune's favour, is the love of racing deep-rooted. Digging in these latter days has been followed by share gambling ; and on the Stock Exchange the price of a horse, being the phrase for the betting odds, is as freely quoted as the favourite gold stock of the hour.

But if the eager crowd derive much pleasure from the pastime, what is not the joy and heartfelt pride of the owner ? An owner is a public man of more importance than a Cabinet Minister. Who cares for the fate of Uganda if Orme be off his feed ? Our "only general" sinks into insignificance compared with the owner of Bend Or. So saith the world. What wonder, then, if Archie Campbell, the successful Kimberley broker, fired with an ambition to be known in the history of his century, pays down a cool fifteen hundred for Chorister, an English three-year-old of renown, and brings him out, to wrest from the too successful Baronet the Kimberley Autumn Handicap ?

Four months before the meeting had Chorister, accompanied by his stable companion Quip, also purchased by Campbell, arrived in Kimberley; and now, after three months' acclimatisation, were these two, along with a host of others good, bad, and indifferent, to be seen every morning as soon as it was light, walking leisurely down in their clothing to the racecourse. And lively enough was the scene on the course even at six in the morning, a month before the meeting. Owners, trainers, jockeys, touts, bookmakers, ladies on horseback, ladies driving, diggers, doctors, lawyers, and more than one parson—all came, and all enjoyed themselves in the cool fresh morning air. Here, at least, was one palpable good, if there were no other: a pleasant walk or ride over the golf links to the racecourse while the day was young.

A fine stretch of open veldt is the Kimberley racecourse; and enclosed, moreover, in a stiff ring fence which the wildest horse that ever bolted in a race could not dream of negotiating, standing, as it does, some eight feet high. The course itself, a mile and a-half in length, is on light sandy ground, with a slight incline known as the hill, just before the "straight" is entered. The grand stand commands a view of every portion of the course from the backmost benches, while the paddock immediately adjoins the stand.

Here, twice a year, in the spring and the autumn, does Kimberley give herself up to the gay dissipation of a race meeting; and here, for weeks before each meeting is held, does some section of the community disport itself in the early morning.

On one of these perfect mornings, with the sky clear, the air cool, and no wind stirring, might be seen the usual gathering, broken up into groups, watching alternately the gallops on the track, and

the walking exercise taken in smaller circles towards the centre of the enclosure.

One of these groups, standing some little distance from the others, was watching carefully a string of half a dozen thoroughbreds with their clothing off, walking round in single file, each mounted by a half-coloured stable boy, stretching their limbs preparatory to their daily gallop. The horses were all stable companions, and followed quietly, one behind the other, the somewhat monotonous round. They formed the racing stud of the most famous colonial stable, were all, though thoroughbred, colonial born, and were owned by a popular colonial digger, who, having been fortunate at diamond-digging, was fain to have another throw with Fortune on the turf. He loved horses and understood them; and but for the fact that a sentimental belief in the invariable superiority of his own stable occasionally got the better of his judgment, he might have been as successful at racing as at digging. But sentiment and betting formed an ill-assorted alliance. If a man runs for the stakes only, let him be as loyal and sentimental to his handsome darlings as he likes; but if he bets, let him beware: weight will stop anything, and an extra stone crush the stoutest and gamest.

On this particular morning, however, Farleigh could not but look with pleasure on his stud.

There in the midst of them strode The Baronet, the veteran winner, the hero of a hundred fights,—a black horse, with a star in his forehead, a large full eye, a soft silky coat, and a strong strain of the Arab in his general appearance; as kind yet resolute a horse as ever carried the top weight first past the post. And this would he have to do in the forthcoming meeting if he

was to win, as his owner devoutly believed he would, the Autumn Handicap.

"Ten stone four! It's a crushing weight, Mr. Farleigh," said Brockhurst; "but The Baronet's never looked nor gone better."

Brockhurst, a small, wiry, determined-looking man, with a large Roman nose and a square set jaw, was Farleigh's trainer and jockey, and in both capacities was not to be surpassed on the South African turf.

Behind The Baronet came Bencher, a bright chestnut, with a lean aristocratic head, and magnificent sloping shoulder, second only to Baronet as a South African flyer. A two-year-old filly, and a pair of three-year-old horses, all selected by Farleigh from the best breeder's stock in the country, completed the string.

And Farleigh, as he watched them walk slowly past, revolves in his mind the question which is agitating all the talent at the present moment, as to whether or no the stable which has had the lead for so many seasons is at length to have its laurels snatched away.

Archie Campbell, too, is down this morning with his lot; and he has his group of friends and admirers watching closely the sturdy little horse, Chorister, bred from the fashionable and winning strain of the day, and brought to South Africa to teach The Baronet his proper place. The race, in the opinion of the sporting world, will be between these two; and never before in South Africa have diamond shares stood so high or race-horses carried more money. And Chorister, as he walks sedately by, cool and quiet as his veteran rival, is worth more than a passing glance.

He is small, being little more than a galloway; but how perfectly formed! A light head, well set on, magnificent shoulders and quarters, and long underneath,

Already in the pink of condition, he looks the picture of a racehorse; and so think Archie and his friends, as they decide to put more on that very day.

“I consider the race over,” said Trewsby-Johnson, with an air of conviction; “there’s only one horse in it.” And if the opinion of Trewsby-Johnson was not as valuable as he himself believed, it was not because he hadn’t paid enough for his experience. He was a member of the Flamingo, a well-known sporting club in London; wore a red necktie, trousers turned up at the bottom, and a cap of peculiar pattern—somewhat impossible for a tropical climate, but approved of by the Flamingo. He had had, so he confessed, cruel luck on the English turf, which really meant that he had at various race meetings persistently backed the wrong horse, until the little fortune with which cruel luck had originally started him in life was gradually absorbed by the appreciative bookmakers.

Under these painful circumstances he had migrated to South Africa, there to seek pastures new.

He was a light-hearted, kindly fellow, and popular with his friends, who readily enough forgave his one weakness—rather a tradition, perhaps, with members of the Flamingo—a firm belief in his own judgment on all matters affecting sport, which only became firmer as he from backing it became, to use his own phrase, “stonier”.

Archie, to whom Flamingo was a sort of Olympus, and Flamingoes Olympians, could not help a shade of confidence in Trewsby-Johnson.

Next day the odds on Chorister had shortened to two to one. And so this drama on the South African veldt passed through its several acts until the last one—the race meeting itself—was reached. And now, begone, dull care! Away from dust and bank overdrafts, let us to the racecourse to witness the biggest race in Africa. A

hundred thousand is at stake. For the men in Kimberley play, as they work, in earnest. A feeling of rivalry between the backers of the imported English crack and the colonial veteran has piled the money on.

By midday what a crowd has assembled! The man with the cocoanuts, the three-card man, the faro table, the "under and over" gentleman,—all are there and in full swing. In front of the stand the bookmakers, a chorus of yelling demons, are shouting the current odds. The Governor of the Colony and his wife, with the Admiral and the General, are in the viceregal box. Sir George Grasshopper, the eminent counsel, who loves a horse-race as keenly as a debate in the House of Assembly, is acting as judge. In the paddock an eager throng are looking over their favourites for the last time.

Archie Campbell and Trewsby-Johnson, the latter in the reddest of his neckties, and the very last and newest of the Flamingo caps, blithe and confident, are watching Chorister having his mouth washed out—an operation of great and absorbing interest. The saddling bell rings; and Farleigh, leading The Baronet, is giving his last instructions to Brockhurst.

Barlow, a tall, soldierly-looking landowner, who has bred more racehorses than any one in the country, is looking over, with considerable interest, a somewhat weedy horse called Rosyboy—a rank outsider in the betting, but with a very light weight to carry. He is owned by a quiet man in a rough tweed suit, a farmer from the Free State, to whom Barlow is talking. No one knows much of horse or owner; and Trewsby-Johnson has emphatically declared that the crock wouldn't win with a postage stamp on his back. Nevertheless, Barlow manages at the last moment to get a "pony" on him at long odds.

And now, one by one the horses leave the paddock and canter past. How beautifully Chorister moves! There's no doubt about it, he's the best horse in the race, and the betting about him is now level. From the straight the horses turn off and walk across the course to the mile and a quarter post, eagerly watched by the crowd. But what is that cloud in the sky beyond the fence? A dark brown cloud spreading across the horizon and coming nearer before the wind? Hitherto the sky has been clear and cloudless, but a fresh wind is blowing from the south. How suddenly the cloud has come up!

"Going to rain," said Trewsby-Johnson.

"Yes," said the quiet man from the Free State. "It is—Locusts."

"What?" half a dozen voices cried.

"Locusts," was the reply.

And soon all doubts were removed as this living storm, now larger and darker in the near distance, sweeps over and on to the racecourse. It is already on the horses as they cross to the ten-furlong post; and it is as much as the jockeys can do to keep their heads to it. A nice element this to be introduced into a game already hazardous enough, which is to settle the fate of a hundred thousand pounds!

The colonial-bred horses have seen locusts before; but how will Chorister take the storm, which is neither hail nor rain? At first he swerves and plunges; but his jockey has him well in hand, and, being as sweet in manners as in looks, he soon reconciles himself to this novel freak of nature, and walks with the rest to the starting post. The thickest part of the cloud has now passed over; but the flight came low down, and they lie in thousands over the whole of the course, and are crushed and broken at every step the horses take.

A curious animal is the locust : dry, scaly, and unpalatable to look at, but of an oily, slippery consistency when crushed ; freely eaten by the natives of the country ; and a positive luxury, if, with Bishop Colenso's permission, we may take the authority of the Old Testament, when served with wild honey. But as a sprinkling for a racecourse, what would be the effect ? Even the imperturbable man from the Free State was nonplussed ; not even he could claim to have seen a race run under such circumstances. The locusts over which the horses passed that were not crushed beneath their feet, rose up in a cloud around them as they moved. A feeling of uncertainty and dismay pervaded every one. But the starter is at the post. All have the same obstacle, if obstacle it be, to face. The race must be run. The flag is raised ; and the horses come to the post.

After two false starts the flag finally falls ; and they get away, all fairly together, and enveloped in a weird haze of a myriad flying insects. The eight-furlong post is reached ; and dimly, through the mist, can be discerned the white and red half a length in front. These are Archie's colours. "Chorister leads !" At the six-furlong post white and red are a clear length ahead ; with The Baronet lying second. They begin to come up the hill ; Chorister has increased his lead. "Hurrah ! The favourite wins ! The favourite wins ! He's got the others all beat," is yelled by a dozen voices in the crowd. They are nearing the turn ; a few seconds and the straight will be reached. But suddenly the mist thickens to a cloud : they are rounding the turn. What has happened ? No colours are visible. But now they are into the straight. Black and gold leads. Where is the white and red ? Where is Chorister ? But there is no time to question. The Baronet's supporters raise deafening yells :

"The old horse wins! Baronet wins!" They are past the distance post. From among the horses behind one comes along with a rush. "It's Chorister." "No!" "White!" "Rosyboy!" He challenges The Baronet: they are neck and neck; both at the whip—ding-dong—ding-dong! Rosyboy gets his nose in front. The race is over. Rosyboy first, The Baronet second, Chorister—no, not Chorister—an outsider third. Where is Chorister? He is not among the horses. What is that little knot of people doing at the turn? Carrying a jockey. A jockey has fallen; yes, and his horse too. That is what caused the cloud and confusion at the turn. Is the boy hurt? No; he moves his hands. They have set him on his feet. But what of the horse? What horse is it? It is Chorister: he lies there dying with a broken back. He slipped upon the locusts where they lay thickest. He could have won in a canter; but now he'll never stand on his legs again. There's only one thing left for him. By and by a man goes down with a rifle. Poor Chorister! True and game: your last race is run!

But it's an ill wind that blows no one any good. The bookmakers are mad with delight. Their books and hats are thrown in the air; they seize each other round the neck, dance, sing, shout. Rosyboy wasn't backed for a hundred pounds.

It's getting late. The saddling bell rings. Get ready for the next race: the Kimberley Autumn Handicap is over.

SNAKES ON THE BORDER.

“Over the trackless past somewhere
Lie the lost days of our tropic youth.”

—*Bret Harte.*

WITH their head-quarters at one of the largest frontier towns, the Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles had men quartered at outlying stations throughout the Kaffir district. The Rifles were a popular corps: the officers were principally men who had held commissions in Her Majesty's Regular forces, while several gentlemen served in the ranks. The colonel in command was an old colonist who had seen service in every Kaffir war since his boyhood, and was respected as a just and brave, if somewhat severe officer, by his men.

Bentley had been enrolled as a trooper in the Rifles some six months. He had been well educated at home, and began life with a little money and a large talent for getting rid of it. He got rid of it in an easy, good-natured way, and acquired in its place, among other things, almost unconsciously to himself by the by, a thirst,—a thirst that required alcohol in some shape or form to allay it, in somewhat frequent doses.

Coming out on the steamer, for instance, it seemed only a healthy robust taste to have two or three sherries at eleven—“an eleven o'clock” it was called on board—an appetiser for tiffin—something with your meals—something after dinner—a night-cap—a tassel

to it, then whisky and milk before breakfast, and say a cocktail in your bath.

All these seemed normal recognised times for a little necessary stimulant,—perfectly harmless and natural Bentley thought, with a few extra whiskies and sodas thrown in for the tropics. His liquor bill certainly was a stiff one—but “they charge so damnably,” said Bentley.

At head quarters—armed with a few letters of introduction—Bentley, in spite of his position, found the time pass pleasantly enough. He had never worried himself, and wasn't going to now. If he ever did feel a bit blue, a glass of cango—it wouldn't run to whiskies and sodas on a private's pay—made him feel all right. And so the game went on,—a wet night now and then : something to take off that jumpy feeling the next day ; until at last after a succession of “wet nights” and “jumpy days,” Bentley was astonished to find himself one morning in the hospital, recovering from an attack of delirium tremens. He had a splitting headache, a bad taste in his mouth, and an unpleasant recollection of snakes and scorpions about the room. He was hauled up before the colonel, severely reprimanded, and sent off to join a troop stationed at Kulati, where they lived in Kaffir-built huts, and patrolled a district of over a hundred square miles.

Besides the Rifles' Camp, and native kraals, Kulati consisted of a mission church, two stores, and a canteen.

“Nasty treacherous stuff that cango,” said Bentley. “Musn't touch it again—I'll take ‘dop’—‘Good old dop’ they called it in the mess, ‘pure juice of the grape’ sounds innocent enough ; and a man must take something,” said Bentley, “in a climate like this.”

He was a good rider, did his patrol work cheerfully, and would tell a story well : so Bentley became here, as, for

the matter of that, he had been everywhere, a popular man; and the nightcaps and the tassels and all the rest of it, came in appropriately enough round the camp fire as little adjuncts to the stories. On patrol two bottles went easily enough into the saddle-bags; and, accompanied by only one other trooper, the discipline on these distant patrols, lasting in some instances over a couple of days, was not uncomfortably strict; and then it was a relief to get back to camp, a bit shaky after the long rides in the sun, and smoke and yarn once more.

After one particularly hot day's patrolling, during which Bentley narrowly missed stepping on a puff-adder while the horses were off saddled in the middle of the day, he returned at night to camp with a splitting headache and a raging thirst. He lay on his bed; a rushing noise was in his ears; he couldn't sleep; he turned from side to side.

Suddenly what was that?

A snake crawled on to the bed; he sprang up; he snatched at it; it was no use, he could not catch it, and now they were crawling all over the tent, up the walls, over the roof. And Bentley was in for his second attack of delirium tremens; and this time he knew it. It was over in a week, and Bentley began to realise he was on the wrong path.

"Pity," said Colville, a quiet little fellow, who had taken a fancy to Bentley, "pity he should chuck himself away like that."

Bentley had been sentenced to fatigue duty after he was able to be about; and, as he himself said, felt he was getting nearer the bed rock than he had ever been before.

There are a number of men who drift through life

somehow—sometimes even without encountering actual disaster—who never realise the main facts of life, especially disagreeable facts. Good luck, bad luck, accidents of all sorts they understand, but anything like inevitable consequences they neither foresee nor recognise when they come upon them ; unless these consequences assume such a positive shape as absolute ruin, or, say, a sheer precipice, when they are sometimes, not always, pulled up with a round turn, and compelled to think. Bentley was one of these ; hitherto he had regarded himself as the spite of fortune. But now ruin and degradation were nigh upon him ; the bed rock was showing through : for the first time in his life he realised with startling clearness that there were depths deeper than those of bad luck.

He talked it over with little Colville ; it was no use mincing matters,—the drink must be given up altogether. For a long time he kept his good resolution, and his word to Colville. But Colville shortly after this had to go away on duty. He was absent for a fortnight ; and Bentley decided—after all, this heroic business was a nuisance, a little couldn't do any harm ; and in a very short time he was taking a good deal.

When he returned Colville saw how things were going on, but said nothing. Bentley in the meantime was restless and miserable : his usual good fellowship seemed to have left him ; the recollection of the horrors of that last attack haunted him, and yet the effort required for abstention seemed too great. Colville he avoided as much as possible, and on his part Colville seemed not to trouble himself about Bentley. One night, Bentley, who had been slipping back into the old reckless devil-mecare mood, came rather late into the hut, which formed

the sleeping quarters of himself and three others, and proceeded to undress. It was a bright moonlight night ; the moonlight streamed in through the open door and window, and pretty well lit up the hut save for a shadowed corner here and there. Bentley was soon undressed, and was about to get into his narrow bed when once more his eye caught that ghastly sight—that devil of a fire-racked soul—a snake flashing out a pale, ashen, lurid grey, in the pure white light of the moon. It writhed ; its glittering eyes petrified him with horror. In another moment it would spring from the roof upon him ! And yet, as he gazed, he knew that what he saw was but a hellish phantom of his own drugged brain. Trembling like a leaf, perspiring at every pore, every particular hair standing on end, with his eyes still fixed before him, he tottered and fell back groaning against the side of the hut.

Colville, who had just fallen asleep, was disturbed by the noise ; and, looking up, saw Bentley, pale as death, gazing before him as if his eyes were fixed in their sockets.

“ Good God, Bentley ! what are you looking at ? ” said Colville.

Poor Bentley ! For a moment his friend’s voice recalled him to himself. He would make one supreme effort to cast out this devil. Putting his hand to his face, he sank upon his bed and answered : “ Nothing, nothing, the sun—my head.”

And Colville, knowing how much the sun had to answer for in Africa, murmured something sympathetic in tone, and went to sleep.

For a moment Bentley’s vision seemed to clear : his mind was steadier ; he looked on the floor, there was

nothing there. He still hoped he might overcome the fiend.

But after getting into bed he looked once more at the roof ; there, oh ! horror ! the serpent gleamed again. Smothering a yell he buried his head in the clothes and murmured a long-forgotten prayer. With his eyes closed, the vision ceased to haunt him. He still would not abandon hope ; and should he overcome this haunting devil, but this once. . .

For the time the utmost depths were about him. Then followed a few hours' troubled sleep, and the morning broke. When Bentley awoke, the sun was already high ; his head ached, ached as if it would crack : then the recollection of the night's horror came back to him.

Still, thank heaven, he felt he was sane. He dressed and was hurrying off again to his duties, when suddenly once more he saw the hated thing above him. With a yell he rushed from the hut, away, down to the stream in the kloof, and there he plunged his aching head in the water. Feeling calmer after this he set his teeth and went off to early parade and a day's patrol. Bread and a water flask were all he put in his saddle-bag. He remained sensible and comparatively calm that day, and felt more confident that he should ultimately lay the demon and escape once and for all that hell on earth, delirium tremens.

But, alas ! poor Bentley, when tired and exhausted he went to rest that night, the demon seized him once more, there—right in the same spot, grey, ghastly and glittering in the moonlight, hung in mid air that emblem of human weakness, a writhing snake !

Despairing and repentant, in bitterness of soul, beneath the blanket Bentley groaned. He would look no more

that night ; worn out in soul and body, Bentley slept till morning.

He awoke feeling almost refreshed. He dressed early, and looked once more at the fatal spot. Yes ! No ! Yes ! Bentley rubbed his eyes—there was the snake !

He walked from the hut, and took a few paces up and down outside. His faculties were all about him. The morning air was cool and fresh. It seemed to give him vigour and determination.

The cocks were crowing in the village, the dew lay on the grass around, and the cattle were feeding down the valley in the broad light of day. The world looked beautiful and young.

No, this thing was monstrous ! He would at least face it, there always—by night and day—ever in the same spot. He strode into the hut and gazed at the snake. A light breeze was blowing through the hut, and it swayed gently to and fro. It had never looked more real. He walked closer. He stretched out his hand. He touched it, and then he tore it down and holding it looked at it bewildered.

“ Ah ! yes, nice specimen, ain’t he, Bentley ? ” said Colville. “ I killed him in the kloof. I’ve seen you take particular notice of him once or twice. I’ll make you a present of him if you like. ”

Without a word, still holding the snake, Bentley rushed from the hut.

I saw Bentley a year after this. “ He was a smart, good soldier,” the captain of his troop told me, and would probably get promotion before long.



THE WIDOW'S DIAMOND MINE.

IT had been a roasting summer in Kimberley so far—late in January, and no rain had fallen—the veldt was as brown as an unbaked brick. Dust found its way everywhere, down men's throats especially. The market was flat: "nothing doing, with a weakening tendency." Brokers and speculators abused first Argentines, and then the shocking over speculation in Americans. Day after day came the same depressing cable from the London Stock Exchange: "Kaffirs dull." The banks were getting a little nervous, and sent letters about overdrafts, and making arrangements for further cover. "So shortsighted and unnecessary," said the harassed clients.

Felstead, a hard-working young barrister, affected, as he himself said, by his environment, hankered after making a fortune in shares, or new mines, or something equally improbable. One's chance does come occasionally. Felstead's came at last.

He was seated one morning in his chambers, clad in a white duck suit, pulling lustily at a pipe of fragrant Transvaal tobacco, and perusing with knitted brows a brief recently handed him for the defence of a notorious illicit diamond buyer.

There was a knock at the door, and a tall, well-made Dutchman, of severe and puritan aspect, presented himself: his name was Venables.

"Mr. Felstead," said Venables, "you are well known

to me in your profession ; and feeling you are a gentleman on whom I can rely, I have determined to place a matter of great importance before you. I am an old digger and a prospector, and I have for the last year been prospecting ; and at last I have found a mine, Sir, as true as—” and here Venables was overcome with emotion—“a mine as rich as De Beers. But I am a poor man, and I want to deal with some one I can trust.”

Felstead asked, a little abruptly, where the mine was situated.

“I have,” said Venables, “a concession of the farm in my pocket. It is in the Free State, and belongs to a widow. I have two diamonds and some garnets, which I got by sorting with a hand sieve.”

“Have you got a permit for the diamonds?” asked Felstead.

“Yes, Mr. Felstead ; here it is, and the diamonds and garnets as well.” And Venables solemnly produced a packet containing two diamonds and some garnets, and the permit of a Free State landdrost.

He then showed Felstead a rough agreement in Dutch, granting him the right to prospect for twelvemonths, with the option of purchase at the termination of this period for a sum in five figures.

“Yes,” said Venables ; “there it is, Sir ; I’m only a plain digger, and I want your assistance to open up the mine and form a company. I want some money to go on with ; and if you’ll work with me I’ll sell you a half-interest for a nominal amount—say a hundred pounds. I shall never require to work again ; my share will be worth half-a-million, though two hundred thousand will do for me—I’m a quiet man—two hundred thousand will be quite enough for — ”

"Stop, Venables," said Felstead ; "don't begin in that way, but come round to my rooms and see me to-morrow night at eight o'clock."

"Ah! Mr. Felstead, I remember the discovery of Bultfontein mine : no one believed in it then ; but we've seen a million or two come out of it since, haven't we?" And with an injured air he walked out.

That evening, after dinner, Felstead and Slowly, who shared a bungalow with him on the outskirts of the town, were seated on the verandah discussing the prospects of the Share Market.

"Anything new, Slowly?"

"No ; nor true that I know of," said Slowly.

"Are you still holding Desperadoes?"

"Naturally."

"Never mind ; they're bound to recover."

"Simultaneously, I should imagine, with the advent of the Greek Calends," replied Slowly.

"By the by, a man came to see me this afternoon ; says he's discovered a diamond mine in the Free State."

"Done it often?" said Slowly.

"Can't say," laughed Felstead ; "but he's been prospecting for a year, and has brought in some garnets and two small diamonds. I hadn't time to listen to him this morning, but he's coming round here to-morrow night ; you had better be at home, and cross-examine him for yourself. He's not of the Boer type at all ; he has been about the diggings for some years, and talks English of a 'superior sort' quite readily."

"Well, if not riches, perhaps amusement, and the 'lie seven times removed,' I'll stay at home and hear him," said Slowly.

And thereafter Felstead and Slowly smoked on in silence.

And Felstead fell a-thinking of the old home surrounded by woods in a valley in the Cotswold Hills, and of how sweet it would be to return a wealthy independent man.

And Slowly, dyspeptic over Desperadoes, couldn't get out of his head those lines of Whyte Melville's, which seem to have a sob in every verse; and contain, perhaps, the bitterest of all words to a man or woman under thirty:—

“All the to-morrows shall be as to-day.”

The next evening Venables appeared, smoking a cigar and with the buoyant jaunty air of a newly made man—that is, as far as so severe a man as Venables could look jaunty; and that in a particularly bad hat.

He told them, in a simple, straightforward way, of his wanderings as a prospector; and of how at length on this distant farm, where dwelt the widow Van der Merwe and her sons, he had found a mine.

It appeared that the deceased Van der Merwe had many years ago, when diamond mining was in its infancy, sunk a well near his house, and in doing so had come upon the characteristic yellow ground of a diamond mine, and discovered two diamonds of considerable size and value. But, being a Boer of the patriarchal type, the thought of having his peaceful farm converted into a rowdy, brawling mining camp, even at the price of boundless wealth, had been repugnant to him. And Venables related in eloquent language how the old Boer and his “vrouw” had filled up the well, buried the diamonds, and kept their secret all these years.

“Unsophisticated bliss!” murmured Slowly.

“But now,” proceeded Venables, “the sons are grown

up, the farm is small for so many of them, the widow is resigned to wealth, and having known me for many years, she confided to me her secret. With the consent of her sons, she made this agreement with me. I sunk a small shaft near the old well, and found yellow ground, and I found the two diamonds ;” and here he flung some yellow ground in a bag on the table, and produced the parcel containing the stones.

“And neither you nor I, Mr. Felstead, if you help me through with this business, will ever require to do a stroke of work again.”

“Ah!” continued Venables, filling up his glass, “I’ve waited long enough for this, but thank God it’s come at last. Two hundred thou——”

“Let’s see the stones,” said Felstead.

“There they are,” said Venables, handing over the two diamonds. “Small, but pure white, as good as ever came out of Kimberley mine.”

“Looks something like Kimberley stuff, doesn’t it, Slowly?”

“Identical,” replied Slowly.

“And another Kimberley mine it is as sure as we are sitting here,” said Venables, glancing scornfully at Slowly. “I only had a hand sieve, and sifted not more than half a load when I got these two stones. It was quite good enough for me. I came right away to camp next morning. Half will be enough for me. I shall take my family home and settle down in Germany. Get a proper agreement drawn up as soon as you can, Mr. Felstead, and let me go to the farm and have it signed by the widow and her sons; you can let me have the cheque in the morning, and you’ll buy something worth having for once in your life: an option to purchase for

twelve months, with the right of digging and washing ; we can prove it in a month, and get enough capital to purchase it ten times over after that."

Rich diamond mines had been discovered in the Free State before ; there was the agreement signed by the widow, the diamonds registered in the Free State, the yellow ground from the mine, and after all it was only a matter of a hundred pounds—another "century" as Slowly called it ; and if he delayed any longer, Venables would negotiate with some one else—Felstead decided to risk it. It was like taking long odds about a horse, he said to himself.

An expedition was fitted out, consisting of an ox cart containing a small washing machine for treating the ground, picks, shovels, etc., and provisions for a month for two men. Felstead selected a young fellow he knew well to accompany Venables to the mine, and both were instructed to get the newly written drawn-up document signed by the widow and her sons, without delay. The farm was distant some three days' journey, but was in a district where diamonds had been reported more than once ; and many old diggers were of opinion that a mine would some day be found there. Felstead had ascertained further, from independent sources, that a small shaft had been recently sunk on the farm, and that an enterprising speculator was already preparing to send a prospector out to report. He therefore hurried off his expedition, and awaited with some impatience the result.

From Venable's companion a letter at length arrived. When within half a day's journey of the farm, Venables had left the cart to go and engage some natives to come and work, leaving his companion to proceed to the mine and await his arrival.

At the farm, the Van der Merwe family awaited Venables with considerable interest. They stated that he had informed them that some crystals, which they had obtained on their farm, were really diamonds, and that their farm contained a diamond mine. He would shortly return, acting on their agreement, with the purchase money, the year's option merely having been inserted as a matter of form. They had lent him twenty pounds to expedite matters. With regard to the well,—no, they had always obtained water from a spring near the home. The writer then went on to say that at the neighbouring village, through which the coach to Johannesburg passed, he had learnt that a tall respectable-looking Dutchman had the day before taken his seat for the Transvaal.

“He was going there,” said the landlord of the Blessbok Hotel, an establishment consisting of two small rooms, and a bar, built of galvanised iron, “to obtain some gold-claims for a Port Elizabeth syndicate.”

Felstead showed Slowly the letter, swearing audibly as he did so.

“An interesting incident,” said Slowly, “in the experience of an astute lawyer. Here it is reduced to classic English. I wrote it last night.” And he handed Felstead a slip of paper:

“Fool burst. Knave cursed.”

THE G. W. HOUNDS.

“ Huntsman, I charge thee tender well my hounds :
Brach Merriman, the poor cur is embossed ;
And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed brach.
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good
At the hedge corner in the coldest fault ?
I would not lose the dog for twenty pound. ”
—*Shakespeare.*

“ But the player may strain every finger in vain,
And the fiddler may rosin his bow,
Nor flourish nor string such a rapture shall bring
As the music of sweet Tally-ho ! ”
—*Whyte-Melville.*

YES, we would have a pack of hounds. Why not ? There was quarry, buck and jackal, lots of horses, not too much scent perhaps, but at any rate plenty of room. Sir Frederick Carrington was getting rid of some of his hounds in Bechuanaland ; a farmer in the Free State had the progeny of a few couple from the Limerick, said to be real fliers ; and Slowly had been presented with a couple and a half “ come home late from their walks in Monmouthshire,” by that prince of sportsmen, the Duke of Beaufort ; Ajax and another from the old Cape Hunt ; a couple from the Cotswold, and our kennel was full. They were a motley lot rather, “ not quite a level pack,” as Slowly said ; some were fat, some lean, and they ranged from nineteen to twenty-six inches.

Our master was as keen as a razor, and had hunted a pack of harriers somewhere in England ; but his note on

the horn, especially when he was a little out of breath, came a trifle harsh : he said it was a beastly bad horn—I think it must have been ; but we were never able to get a better.

The first lot of hounds to arrive were five and a half couple from the Free State ; they had been totally neglected for six months, running loose on the farm and left to feed themselves on what they could kill in the veldt. They used to go out periodically, entirely alone, and under the leadership of one of their number—Warrior. They were as wild as a lot of March hares ; but, as we afterwards found, they had thoroughly mastered the art of hunting and killing their own quarry. I never saw hounds cast more scientifically nor hunt better than these five and a half couple, left entirely to the management of old Warrior, which is one more piece of testimony in favour of leaving hounds to themselves as much as possible when a check occurs.

However, we had to get them into the kennels, teach them to stay there, and to hunt when we, not only when they, wanted. The first night they burrowed a deep tunnel under the wall of the building, and all escaped. A row with sundry curs outside fortunately wakened the Kaffir sleeping at the kennels, and he managed to get them all back save one—Tragedy. It took two days and a half to get Tragedy back. We tried coaxing ; we took the other hounds out and tried to get her to join them. We hunted her round the mine ; over miles of débris heaps through the Kaffir location. We hired a dozen natives. We offered a reward, and had at least six applicants, with wonderful and fearful-looking curs, come to claim it. But we got her at last ; and for a month afterwards kept her coupled to Merryboy, who

was blind in one eye, a bit stiff in the joints, and the father of the small Free State pack.

The other hounds arrived in due course, and we started regular exercise before breakfast. The horn had improved a little, not much, with use. We appointed a whip, and talked about a uniform for the huntsman and a hunt button. Our great difficulty was to find a man who really understood hounds—that is, their feeding and exercise, and so on ; a man who could be kennel huntsman and first whip, and could talk to them in a really orthodox way. We got one at last ; he had been first whip to Lord L——d for several years, he said ; his voice was a bit husky, but he understood the language. We were much impressed the first few mornings he entered on his duties and accompanied the hounds to exercise. He seemed to know more about hounds than the Badminton book on hunting and Stonehenge put together. We felt we had a treasure. But at the end of a week—alas ! for the frailty of human nature—we found our treasure had a failing : he drank. He drank not merely till he was drunk, but till he absolutely could not get another drop down ; till all he could do was to lie on his back and beg some one to pour it over him, because he “loved the smell of it”. For a time we overlooked these misdemeanours ; we expostulated with him ; we got him to sign the pledge and wear a blue ribbon. But it was of no use ; and the climax arrived one morning when we found him snoring on the litter among the hounds lying around, under, and on him. It was evident that even canine discipline could not stand this, and we regretfully parted. There were no more first whips or kennel huntsmen by profession on the diggings, so we fell back on a Kaffir to feed them and rub them down,

and appointed two members of the hunt first and second whips. The new whips stuck to their duties like men. They were always there at sunrise to help the master take the hounds out for an airing ; but their exhortations to the hounds were of a jerky character and lacked music.

Partly owing to this, and partly perhaps to the peculiar nature of the country, one young hound, an imported one, was seized with a sudden terror one morning, and made a clean bolt across the veldt. Away he went due north, his tail between his legs, as fast as he could go. He never looked round ; he never stopped ; he went straight on, away into space. We never saw him again. There was nothing to stop him between Kimberley and Matabeleland ; and perchance he has joined the motley pack of his late Majesty Lobengula, which now makes night hideous round Buluwayo.

We took the whole pack out coupled for a week after this, and tried to get the whips to take lessons in music.

But patience and perseverance work wonders ; the huntsmen seemed to have them in hand at last. The winter was coming on ; a little rain had fallen. We arranged to meet regularly twice a week, and seriously begin the season. Expectation was running high. Several tailors on the fields had begun to add " breeches maker " to their ordinary advertisement ; and an enterprising storekeeper suddenly displayed in his window several pairs of tops, in colour something like brown paper. The button had arrived—a stembok on a diamond—and was pronounced a great success. Scarlet was selected as an appropriate colour. We had a trial spin one morning early, and killed a buck after a thirty minutes' gallop ; the Free State hounds leading all the

way. We were naturally elated at our success, and the huntsmen and whips rose in our estimation. They had taken a great deal of trouble, and well earned some reward.

A meet was advertised at six A.M. at the Grand Hotel for Saturday next. The costumes at that meet were worth seeing.

There were boots of the concertina pattern, diggers' boots that laced half way up the front, ornamental continental looking boots with a fancy kneepiece, these being chiefly affected by gentlemen of foreign extraction; boots of patent leather, of untanned leather, all sorts and sizes, some with tops—the tops varied from two to nine inches in depth. Then the coats; there was one, a good old swallow-tail of a faded pink; the owner had got it on with great difficulty,—it fitted him once, he said. The huntsmen and whips were in brilliant bran new scarlet. But one man was there, the envy and admiration of all; from head to foot his dress was perfect. Hunting cap, pink coat, fancy vest, flesh-coloured tops, boots and spurs,—all of the most correct and newest pattern. He gave a tone to the whole thing. We felt he was worthy of the occasion; we were proud of him. No one knew who he was or where he came from; our meet had unearthed a new sportsman. After Tragedy had twice bolted back to the kennels and the whips were beginning to fume a little over their duties, we made a start and rode out of the town. The morning was cold; our master gave one of his best notes on the horn, and we soon were going at a brisk trot, "a glad throng". But what was the matter with our ornamental man, he of the perfect get-up? He was rolling and bumping about on his horse. Was the hour

too early for him? Ever and anon he snatched at his horse's mane as if to steady himself. He must be ill. Slowly inquired if anything was the matter, and asked if he would have a drink.

The stranger declared he was all right, and somewhat brusquely declined Slowly's offer.

After this it became too palpable, the man had never been on a horse before. He remained with us for a couple of miles, and then dropping behind was seen to alight and get into a cart, in which he drove home, giving his horse to a Kaffir.

Slowly made a few inquiries, and informed us that evening that the stranger was a gentleman of an ancient Eastern race; that he was not addicted to horse exercise, but that, being a man of æsthetic taste and a proper sense of the fitness of things, he had selected the dress as a suitable costume for a fancy dress ball in Capetown, where it had been much admired. Feeling that another occasion for its display had arrived, he had, urged on in a weak moment by his sister, essayed to come to the meet on a horse specially selected for his quiet manners. "He's only one more," concluded Slowly.

South Africa an hour after sunrise on a winter's morning, with the atmosphere crisp and cool, a slight film of mist lying here and there in the hollows, no wind stirring, a clear sky overhead, and the landscape broken with patches of low bush and scrub scattered over the rolling surface of the wide grass plains, is not a bad place for a ride. Holes there are undoubtedly in pretty fair quantity over the veldt, the haunts of ant-bears, wolves, jackals and meercats,—nasty places to go into at full gallop; and so is a ditch which you didn't expect on the

far side of a hedge in the shires. But these are little risks incidental to hunting in most places ; though Mrs. Sparkins, one of our best lady riders, tells me that somewhere in France where “ *le sport* ” is affected, every hole or rough piece of ground is carefully labelled “ *Danger* ”. One great safeguard against riding into holes in the veldt is that your horse is not a bit more keen about going into one than you are, and keeps a pretty sharp look-out for the main chance, often swerving and avoiding a hole which you had not noticed. Veldt-bred horses are often wonderfully safe, and go for years without making a mistake ; imported horses and horses that have been raced on the flat are dangerous. There were several ladies out our first morning, and two or three Cape carts full of spectators. A few miles from town we drew, what we afterwards called, our home cover : it was a straggling, scrubby bit of bush, stretching over the crest of a long undulating piece of sandy ground, and afforded good cover for stembok.

The hounds worked in good style, and led by Warrior evidently meant business ; and the heart of many a country-bred Englishman warmed as he saw after long years their waving sterns once more. “ Oh, those waving sterns ! ” I thought of a dear old rector I once knew, who used to say “ he didn’t hunt, he hadn’t got the horses, besides people don’t like it in a parson nowadays ; he went to the meet just to see their sterns wave. ” He sometimes remained with them still watching their sterns when three-fourths of the field were out of sight.

The hounds had not been more than five minutes in the bush when Warrior gave tongue, and a full-grown stembok ram jumped out, not twenty yards from his nose.

For a minute our master held up his hand, and as the last few hounds streamed after their fellows racing in full chorus, with the buck still in sight, he gave a yell of "Gone away!" which fairly rent the air, and started our field at a breakneck pace in his wake. A nimble animal is the Cape stembok, one of the fleetest of small antelopes; he takes a lot of catching, and many a time will race clean away from a pair of greyhounds on the open plain. This buck was no exception; he gained rapidly on the hounds, and turning sharply round the corner of the bush was soon out of sight in the grass on the plain beyond. The hounds checked for a minute on losing sight, but soon picked up the scent and followed at a slightly slower pace. The flat over which we now rode was full of holes, and, as bad luck would have it, the grass was longer than usual. One of the whips came down, but wasn't hurt. Ten minutes over the flat, "all going strong," brought us to a stony "kopje," or round hill sticking out of the middle of the plain. For a time the hounds were at fault; but sweeping out they made a cast round the foot of the hill, and came right on the buck lying close in the stones. He seemed to jump right up in the middle of them, and almost brushed Warrior as he made a vicious dash at his flank. Frantic with excitement and giving tongue in a wild mad chorus, the hounds raced after him once more across the open veldt. Some of the field were left on the kopje, a few scrambled down in time to get away with the hounds, and they were rewarded with twenty minutes as hard a piece of riding as heart could desire. Twenty minutes without a check, and then the scent failed on a sandy tract, where all the grass had been burnt off; and after casting vainly for some time even Warrior threw up his head. The sun was getting warm

by this time ; and we rode home to a late breakfast, well enough satisfied with our first day. "Toby," a well-known, popular digger, and the son of a squire in the Blackmoor Vale, who had twice fractured his collar bone as a youth when out with this classic pack, declared, while mopping his ruddy countenance, that for fifteen years he had played most games in South Africa, coursing and shooting included, but that never had he enjoyed life more than during his first half hour with the G. W. H.

We had a good deal of chaff in the early days. Losing our buck the first day was unfortunate. But we had two or three kills shortly afterwards, and at least retrieved our reputation on that score. There were men who said, "You can't hunt in a filthy country like this ; there are no fences." "For that reason," replied Slowly, "*you could* see some hunting here."

Slowly got himself disliked sometimes.

But there came a day, about a month after we started advertising our meets, and while we were still young and sensitive, which was one of humiliation to us. The winter was well advanced, and we had an afternoon meet. We were not men of leisure, and could only hunt in the early morning, or the afternoon occasionally. The ladies had a strong preference for the afternoon. We met about six miles from town, where we knew there were plenty of buck, and where there was a nice country to ride over, soft for the horses and free from stones and "kopjes". The one objection to the place was that the only fenced farm in the district lay about a mile to the east. And this was fenced with stiff wire about six feet high. To run into this meant sure catastrophe. If the buck made in this direction, the hounds were to be whipped off before the fence was

reached. It seemed all right on paper. We began drawing away from the fence, and very soon found a buck, a strong, full-grown one, which started off due west. There was a burning scent through somewhat long grass, and the pace was a regular cracker. All was going well, when the buck suddenly doubled and made in a direction parallel with the fence; then he veered round, got nearer, and made straight for it. The pace was, if anything, hotter than ever; old Warrior was going scent breast high, as hard as he could race. It would be no trifling matter to stop him, contemptuous of discipline as he was, and, indeed, of everything but his own instincts, which he knew were sound. Half the pack was at his heels; the remainder tailed away behind, "all doing their damndest," as Toby, acting whip for the afternoon, put it.

"Whip 'em off!" yelled the master; and Toby, redoubling his efforts, did his best to get up with the leading hounds.

The buck was already through the fence, and actually in view as he tore up the hill beyond.

"Get on, for God's sake; or we shall lose the whole pack!" again shouted the master, blowing wildly on the horn. Could he do it in time? Yes; with whip and spur hard at it, Toby at length got between the leading hounds and the fence. Rating in good broad Saxon, and plying the whip freely, the hounds for a moment were checked. In the meantime, the tail hounds were coming up; and viewing, for the first time, the buck as he crossed the crest of the hill inside the fence, and seeing something was wrong in front, they turned away to the left, and were through the fence before Toby, who made a dash at them, could stop them. Warrior and his boon

companions of many a self-conducted chase in the Free State now got their chance, and were no longer to be denied. Toby, breathless, purple and swearing, and the rest of us, were on one side of a six-foot wire fence; the hounds--rapidly vanishing over the hill--were on the other. The nearest gate was three miles off, and probably locked. In two hours it would be dark. The hounds were getting further from us every minute; they were not yet too fond of their new kennels, as we knew from experience. Led by old Warrior, and having killed their buck, they might go clean away to the Free State. Besides, the ignominy of the thing! What was to be done? "Over! over! over!" facetiously shouted the man in the pink swallow-tail, who galloped up at that moment; but no one laughed. Things were getting serious; the last hound had vanished over the hill, and the occasional whimper from the leading hounds was heard no more. In the meantime, Toby, perspiring at every pore, had got off his horse, and seized one of the most slender of the fence poles. It was made of sneeze wood, and seemed as firm as iron. Toby tugged and pushed. It moved slightly. Half a dozen willing hands flew to his assistance. The pole at length began to rock to and fro; it was getting looser. Now up with it! And after some five minutes struggling, the pole was pulled up and thrown half over. Then the huntsmen and whips got their horses over; two or three of us followed, one horse fairly tying himself in a knot with the wires and falling with his rider in a very unpleasant heap. We were miles behind, and not a hound to be seen or heard. We galloped to the spot where they had crossed the hill; clumps of bush lay scattered around, we could not see far, and here decided to divide up

and hunt for the hounds. Some rode one way, some another, as hard as we could go and until the darkness fell ; and not a single hound did one of us find that night.

We all got home at last in twos and threes, trying to get through camp without attracting attention. We found our way to the kennels : everyone told the same tale,—not a hound had been sighted. In the kennels were old Merryboy and a brace of pups ; they seemed very glad to see us, but not another hound was there. We could do no more that night, so we went home. I didn't go into the club that evening, I don't think many of the others did. But next morning it was all over the four camps, and we did have rather a nasty time of it. Even Slowly found it difficult to hold his own, and avoided public resorts as much as possible. The huntsmen, whips, and a few others went off at sunrise, and scoured the country : they returned in the middle of the morning without having seen a trace of the pack. At intervals, all through that day, we sneaked round to the kennels ; but the result was always the same. Up till late that evening, not one of the wanderers had appeared ; it became pretty evident we had lost our pack. They must have gone with the Free State hounds back to the farm. This was two days' journey on horseback and four days with a waggon ! There was nothing for it : we must get those hounds back if we had to charter an expedition to Central Africa. Toby volunteered to start for the Free State next morning ; a waggon was to follow him. Life on the fields, for any one connected with that hunt, was getting too awful for anything, Toby said. But that night, good counsels must have prevailed among the truants : their sense of humour had been sufficiently gratified. Three couples

came back to the kennels ; and so, in twos and threes did they continue to return for the next few days. After that we got on without further catastrophe, and have had many a good run since ; but, like all good things which have ever flourished in South Africa, from the Chartered Company to the Rand Polo Club, we had our little troubles in the early days.

HOW SELBY BECAME A SERGEANT.

FOR men who have no particular profession in life, who disdain the drudgery of clerical work, and who are under the painful necessity of making a living, the colonies have always had a strong attraction.

There is something romantic about the idea of ranching in the Wild West or squatting on the Australian "backs," which have led many bolder spirits to try their luck over sea. Others again, of less robust calibre, threatened perchance with some lung mischief, are sent abroad to the colonies to farm, in the hope that the healthy open-air life will build up their constitution. To this latter class Selby belonged ; and, although a thriving colonist to-day, he did not originally emigrate to South Africa from a restless love of adventure, or from any inborn conviction that he would make a fortune in five years and return to his native land, there to live in luxurious obscurity for the rest of his days. He came because his health compelled him to try a warmer, drier climate ; but, having come, he settled down like a philosopher to the new life and new prospects. He was fortunate enough to find a home where he might learn something of colonial farming with a colonial-born English farmer—Brown by name—who, in addition to having a large block of well-stocked farms on the eastern frontier of the colony, was an educated and kind-hearted man, fond of his stock, his sport, and the country of his

birth. Mr. Brown's father had been killed in one of the earliest Kaffir wars ; and, although he was a just master to his native servants and a popular one, his sentiments with regard to natives were not those of Exeter Hall.

In this flourishing and thoroughly colonial household Selby settled down to his new life. His health and horsemanship (the latter originally of a fair order) soon improved in this genial atmosphere. He became an adept at counting sheep, plucking ostriches, and hunting up missing stock ; and, being naturally of an easy-going, agreeable temperament, became popular with the Browns and the neighbouring farmers and their families. A year passed pleasantly enough in this way, Selby could shoot a springbuck on occasion with his rifle and a little luck, and began to regard himself as an accomplished stock farmer.

But, unfortunately, life is not always peaceful and prosperous on the colonial frontier. From time to time have occurred Kaffir wars, usually ushered in with the massacre of a few white men, and always attended with bloodshed on both sides.

At these times the farmers, getting together in "laagers" or fortified homesteads to protect their stock, send forth the younger among them to form burgher corps ; and splendid soldiers do they make—more dreaded by the Kaffirs than either the Imperial or even the Colonial regular forces. Thoroughly at home in the veldt, good shots and good riders, there is no better light cavalry anywhere.

Within a year of Selby's arrival one of these outbreaks occurred. Stock was brought in hurriedly from the out-station, troops were ordered to the front, and the farmers were called on to volunteer for service ; a

commission being given to one of the best known and oldest on the frontier to form a burgher corps.

Burghers were to bring their own horses, and, if they preferred, their own arms ; but the latter, in the shape of cavalry carbines, could, if desired, be obtained from the Government.

Seven days for preparation and the corps was to be in readiness to march under its leader, Colonel Barton.

Preparations were soon afoot. Brown's son, a strapping young colonist, a dead shot and a good rider, offered his services. The Saunders family, a large clan scattered about the frontier, sent several members, and on all hands neighbours were coming gallantly forward. The philosophic Selby was perturbed in his mind. It was true his health was now good ; he was a fair rider, owned the approved sporting Cape weapon of offence or defence, being one barrel smooth bore and the other rifled, the favourite weapon with the colonist even in war, the smooth bore being found handy when loaded with buck-shot at close quarters. He certainly had not much stock of his own to protect ; but still this was his adopted country, and he liked to play the game as a true citizen should. Should he content himself with remaining and helping to protect the "laager," or should he join the bolder spirits and go to the front ? In this doubting frame of mind was he when Jack Saunders, looking very smart in new cord breeches and a red puggaree (the badge of the corps) round his felt wideawake, rode up to the door one morning a few days before "Barton's Rangers," as the corps was to be called, were to meet at Grahamstown. A new valise was on the saddle in front, and a brand new blanket of a belligerent pattern strapped on behind. Jack's horse, a large bay with a Roman nose,

was in the pink of condition; and altogether, as Miss Brown, who was standing with Selby at the time on the verandah evidently thought, they looked, covered as they were with a halo of prospective glory, a very handsome and soldierly pair.

“Good morning, Miss Brown! I’ve just been getting a few things for the little expedition in store for us, and must try and get back to Willowmore to-night.”

“I hope it will be only a little expedition,” said Miss Brown; “it will be big enough at any rate for those of us left behind.”

“Going with us, Selby, of course?” said Saunders.

“Don’t know, can’t make up my mind,” replied Selby. “You see, I’m not so good a hand at making my own bread, or digesting it for that matter, as some of the rest of you; one requires a little education to appreciate damper.”

“Quite true, Selby; but we should like to have you with us, and we’ll take some baking powder, warranted to make even damper light and palatable. Then we shall have plenty of milk and beef when we’ve recaptured some of our stolen cattle,” added Jack, rather grimly.

“Well, I’ll talk it over with Mr. Brown to-night,” said Selby, pleased at the martial Jack’s evident wish that he should join.

Mr. Brown, who looked on fighting Kaffir stock thieves as a healthy and pleasant occupation for any one not otherwise engaged, and who very much regretted that he was unable to join the corps himself, readily consented to Selby’s proposition to go, and offered him every assistance in his preparations.

The best of all weapons, the Cape gun-and-rifle as it

is called, Selby had ; his valise, billy, blanket, and minor trifles which make up the kit, could be got in a few hours in town ; all he wanted was a good horse.

Now, Selby was no fool ; when he said a good horse he (in this instance particularly) meant a good horse, and a horse, as Selby said to himself, " which, if we get in a mess with these devils, will carry me well out of it. If I perish for my country, it shall not be because I am left behind during a temporary retreat."

Now, such a horse, belonging to a man on the next farm, Selby knew ; a raw-boned but speedy animal, called, from the beauty of his appearance, the " Camel".

In spite of the good cause, the " Camel's " owner was a little extortionate as to price ; but Selby was determined to buy him, and buy him he did. " A good old flier, Mr. Selby, and dirt cheap at the price," said his owner. " If it hadn't been for these damned niggers I should have entered him for the Ladies' Plate at our meeting next month ; but now there'll be no meeting, and he might do worse, I suppose, than go to the front with Barton's Rangers ; so, take him, though it's clean chucking him away at the money."

The " Camel," thus chucked away, duly appeared upon the day appointed, mounted by the now complacent Selby. His valise—a little bulky owing to an extra pair of boots—contained, in addition to the aforementioned luxury, a shirt, pair of breeches, a billy (a small tin can used for cooking), pair of socks, knife and fork, and a blue woollen nightcap—the last invaluable for sleeping in the open. Behind the saddle, a blanket and mackintosh sheet ; from the side of the saddle, a revolver ; resting on his thigh, and held by his right hand, his rifle.

This kit, minus the mackintosh sheet, the extra boots

and breeches, nightcap, and the revolver (little adjuncts which Selby thought might be conducive to his safety or comfort), form the kit of the South African burgher.

Thus mounted and equipped did Selby appear at the first parade of Barton's Rangers, the number (in all some hundred and twenty) being made up of Dutch and English colonial farmers, and a few young Englishmen, who, like Selby, had come to South Africa to learn farming.

Colonel Barton's address was brief and to the point. They were to start next day for King William's Town. Their drilling—such little as was necessary for their guerilla warfare—would be given as opportunity occurred on the march and at the front. They were enjoined to keep their eyes well open through the bush, and to take good care of their horses.

The next day, headed by the local band, Barton's Rangers rode slowly down the main street, lined on either side with wives, sisters, and sweethearts, old friends and new friends, all wishing them God-speed. Slowly they wended their way to the outskirts of the town, where the band came to a standstill; and, as the strains of "The British Grenadiers" grew fainter and fainter, the cheering and the sobbing gradually died away on the still morning air, and the last waving handkerchief was lost to view as they rounded a turn in the dusty waggon road. But, "heels down, head and heart up," the way was long, and Fish River Bush must be crossed before dusk. Grimly and silently the burghers rode forward.

Jokes and laughter came freely enough later on; but for the first few hours of that morning the burghers were silent; even the blithe Jack spoke never a word, and

was not himself until his horse, rather young and skittish for a trooper, broke away from him at the first "off-saddle".

Then, what with collecting firewood, filling the billies, getting the horses out to graze under guard, cooking a late breakfast, and chaffing Selby over his somewhat prolonged operations in getting the fire of his mess started, dull care was dismissed, strong coffee being a splendid restorer.

In two days, with forced marching—Barton never allowed the horses to be pushed out of a fast ambling walk—King William's Town was reached. Here Selby parted with the extra pair of boots, which seemed to fit worse and worse in that valise as the journey continued, and even threatened to give the patient but high-spirited "Camel," in spite of a gay-coloured and extensive saddle-cloth, a sore back, unless dispensed with. Commissariat waggons were attached to the corps at King William's Town, and, as each trooper was allowed a little accommodation for personal effects, a few more of Selby's luxuries, as they were termed by his friends, were removed from the "Camel," much to that animal's relief.

Colonel Barton—a hardy old frontier pioneer, who had been in every Kaffir war since his boyhood—was no stickler for red tape, pipe-clay or military precision in trifles, as long as his men could ride well, shoot well, and were ready and willing to do his bidding.

They arranged themselves into "messes" of some half-dozen each, and the whole corps was divided into two troops, each under a separate captain.

Jack and Selby were in the same mess; and, as each mess was provided with a tent carried on the wagon, they shared the same tent. This arrangement was very

pleasant for Selby ; for, although fairly at home in the veldt, Jack was always ready to lend him a hand when the wood was wet or the bread refused to rise—trifling things enough in themselves, but important when half a dozen hungry men are waiting. Each member of the mess was cook by turn, and Selby had to take his turn with the rest.

“ Pleasant weather this, eh, Selby ? ” said Captain Lundy one morning as he sauntered into his tent, pitched on a camp on the banks of the Kei, where Selby sat with the second uniform on, nearly wet through, the first hanging in a sodden condition from the tent pole. “ You must have been a little sick of horse guard last night. ”

“ Yes,” said Selby, “ it was a bit monotonous, but it’s no good growling. I don’t suppose there’s a stitch of dry clothing in camp at the present moment—forty-eight hours’ rain without stopping ! It’s not all beer and skittles campaigning—even when you are not being assegaied. ”

“ Well, Selby, wet or dry, to-morrow morning we start at three, so as to be at the mouth of the T’Chaba Valley by daylight. Jack Saunders has just come in from patrolling along the head of the kloof, and reports the bush full of Kaffirs and cattle. It’s the best chance we’ve had yet, and I mean to have the cattle out somehow. I shall take my troop—so you will be in it—and some of Warnford’s men, and the colonel has given me a roving commission for to-morrow. ”

Selby was nothing loth at the prospect of a skirmish, after nearly a week in camp ; and seeing that rifle and ammunition were in perfect order, he went out to have a look at the “ Camel ” and hear the news from Jack himself. The weather was warm ; and Jack, with nothing more than a pair of boots and a smile on, was rubbing

down his horse. He told Selby more fully what he had seen, and added :

“ If we get down at daylight, we shall find them feeding the cattle outside the bush ; and if we are smart, we can cut them off before they get the cattle back again ; once in the bush it won't be such easy work.”

“ Well, Jack, you promise us some fun anyhow ; I'll walk over to the horses out feeding and have a look at the ‘ Camel ’ : your horse looks fit enough in spite of the grass fare.”

Being satisfied with his inspection of the “ Camel,” Selby left him to feed till sundown, when all the horses were brought in and tied up to the waggons, ready for the early start.

At half-past two the *réveillée* was sounded in the little camp ; and where before, save for the four sentinels on duty, all had been sleeping and silent, was a stirring scene of bustle and preparation.

The rain had stopped, and a pale moon was struggling to make herself seen through the mist. In ten minutes horses were saddled and mounted ; and, with Lundy in command, the troop rode slowly off in the darkness to the T'Chaba Valley.

Jack, who was famous even among colonists for his knowledge of what, for want of a better term, we must call “ veldt-craft,” acted as guide.

Two hours' riding through the mist, over a rough piece of country traversed with deep kloofs, brought them to T'Chaba.

The “ rooi daag ” was just breaking in the east, and the small reconnoitring party, consisting of Jack and two other troopers, who had been sent a little in advance to see how the land lay, could dimly discern a troop of

cattle feeding outside the thick bush which filled the valley, with the dark forms of Kaffirs dotted here and there among them. The reconnoitring party, having dismounted, crept nearer on hands and knees, and at length could make out a large body of some few hundred Kaffirs squatting some little distance from the bush, watching the large herd of cattle, at least a thousand in number, grazing at the mouth of the valley. The scouts hurried back and reported to Captain Lundy, who was waiting with his troop in some scrub, what they had seen.

A short council of war was held, and Lundy determined to try and cut off the Kaffirs, and at the same time secure the cattle. The dawn, which, like the evening twilight in South African latitudes, is of short duration, was spreading over the whole sky, and the light increasing rapidly. The command was given; and the troop advancing at a sharp canter suddenly burst on the view of the astonished Kaffirs. For a moment the Kaffirs hesitated; but, seeing that retreat meant the loss of all their cattle, they determined to make a stand, and with wild yells opened a desultory fire on the troopers. Lundy's men fired one volley; and then, rapidly reloading, received the order to charge.

The distance between the hostile forces was about half a mile; and Lundy had ordered his men, if possible, to ride between the bush at the mouth of the valley and the Kaffirs, and thus cut off their retreat.

No sooner was the word to charge given than the whole troop dashed forward at a hand gallop.

Selby, with the blood tingling in his veins, felt with delight the sweeping, even stride of the "Camel" beneath him. Forward to glory, and a share in the captured

cattle, thought Selby ! Forward also seemed to be the "Camel's" ambition, as he laid himself down to it, and tugged at the reins ; and forward he went at racing speed past all his comrades.

" Gently ! " said Selby, as he tugged at his impetuous steed's mouth ; but the "Camel's" blood was up, and, tug as Selby might, away he raced to the fore, now being several lengths ahead of the whole troop. " At this rate," said Selby to himself, " I shall be among these yelling devils a couple of hundred yards before the others ; " and once more he tugged with his one free hand, but the "Camel's" mouth seemed iron ; and further, still further, did he leave the troop behind. For a moment Selby thought of dropping his rifle and seizing the reins with both hands ; but no, the ignominy would be too great ; he must stick to his motto, and " play the game ".

In the meantime the troop behind were struck with mingled astonishment and admiration at Selby's gallant lead.

" By Jove ! " cried Lundy, " Selby is making the pace a cracker ; we mustn't lose him ; come along, boys ! " And forthwith, digging their spurs into their horses, the troop pressed after him.

In the meantime, Selby, still further ahead, began to think his fate was sealed ; the "Camel," heedless of any danger, would not be checked : he was in for a race, and he meant to win it.

Every moment he got nearer the Kaffirs, who still stood their ground yelling and firing shots wildly, which for the most part passed over the troopers' heads. Nearer, still nearer, in another few seconds he would be alone amongst them. But at racing speed thundered the troop behind. For a moment the Kaffirs hesitated, awestruck at this

terrific charge ; then they turned and fled not directly to the bush but into some thick scrub on the hill side behind them, and from hence by a *détour* into the bush. Right on their heels pressed Selby—thanking heaven for their flight—and the “Camel” seeing the thick scrub ahead, began to slacken speed, then swerving was at length stopped by his nearly exhausted rider right on the edge of the bush. The whole troop now closed up, and dismounting fired a volley at the retreating Kaffirs, of whom several fell before the bush was gained.

Of the troopers one young Dutchman sank to the ground, with a bullet through his lungs, dead. The sergeant was slightly wounded in the leg. But the battle was over and won. The dead trooper was carried back to camp, while behind this mournful procession came the thousand head of cattle, the biggest troop in the Kaffirs’ possession anywhere on the southern bank of the Kei. On the whole the skirmish was a great success, the Kaffirs in the kloofs along the Kei were thoroughly disheartened, and went shortly after *en masse* to join the main body in the Peri Bush, where the final stand was made.

That night in camp was one of general satisfaction ; and many were the flattering comments on Selby’s plucky lead. “Your pace was too much for them, Selby. What price the ‘Camel’? It’s a wonder some of us didn’t come down on that rough ground and break our necks ; but there’s no doubt the pace saved us a stand-up fight”—and so on round the camp fire all the evening.

Selby smoked his pipe complacently ; sat tight, and said little. There was no doubt he had led the charge, and, as it turned out, effectually : why give himself away ?

So they sat on over the dying embers of the fires,

which were not allowed to be kept up after dark. One by one the tired troopers, not on duty, turned in, till Jack and Selby were left alone together.

"There's no doubt you gave us a quick thing this morning, Selby," said Jack.

"Yes," said Selby; "I suppose it was pretty fast."

Then followed a few puffs of both pipes in silence.

"A good goer, the 'Camel'; doesn't pull at all, I suppose, Selby, does he?" said Jack, with the suspicion of a twinkle in his eye.

Selby puffed a few moments without answering, and then said:

"What do you think, Jack?"

"Well, I know he's been raced a bit."

"That'll do, Jack; don't spoil the fun."

"Don't be afraid of that, old chap."

With that they knocked the ashes out of their pipes, and, turning in, slept that sleep that is "sore labour's bath"—sweet, tranquil, and dreamless.

Colonel Barton was more than pleased at the result of the expedition. He had received a full account of it from Captain Lundy, and the next morning paraded his men, and addressed a few words to them.

"They had," he said, "undoubtedly struck a severe blow at the strength of the Kaffirs, who had held these kloofs south of the Kei, so long their stronghold, from whence they sallied forth on cattle-raiding expeditions. They had made a magnificent haul of cattle, most of which were undoubtedly stolen from the colonists, and had done so in a particularly smart manner. He complimented Captain Lundy; and then went on to touch on the plucky way in which Selby had ridden at the foe. Possibly Selby had erred a little on the side of

rashness ; but he liked pluck in a soldier—even a little too much of it occasionally—and he therefore thought he could not do better than offer Selby the position of Sergeant in place of Sergeant Nicholls, wounded and unfit for duty.”

The speech was received with applause by the corps, and some little surprise by Selby. His first inclination after the parade was over was to decline the proffered honour ; but Jack, seeing him in doubt, told him not to be an ass ; so he determined to accept the promotion, and obtain a new bit for the “Camel” on the first opportunity. He couldn’t help smiling to himself when he thought of what Mr. Labouchere—could he get hold of the story—would have to say in *Truth* to this instance of promotion by merit ; and he speculated whether he would in this case wax as virtuously indignant over merit as he invariably does over favour.

The war dragged on to the final attack at the Peri Bush, where Sandilli was killed, and the war ended. Throughout the campaign Selby ably and creditably discharged his duties as Sergeant. The attack on the Peri, which was carried out by a combined movement of all the colonial and imperial forces, was completely successful, though attended with the loss of many good lives. Among these was Jack Saunders. Some Fingoe levies, of whom the colonists had several corps, being hotly pressed by the Kaffirs, on one occasion retreated in confusion and were followed by the Kaffirs in hot pursuit. Some of the Rangers, among whom was Jack, came upon the Fingoes in full retreat, and drawing up in line dismounted and faced the Kaffirs at close quarters, driving them back with several volleys into the bush. The Fingoes’ salvation cost poor Jack’s life ; for he fell shot through the head, never to rise again.

When hostilities had ceased, Barton's Rangers were disbanded at King William's Town, and Selby returned to the farm.

After some two years more of farming he betook himself to one of the colonial towns, where he entered into business as a merchant, and soon became a leading citizen. To-day he represents his town in the Colonial Parliament, where he is expected to make his mark. It's an old story now; and Selby makes no secret of how in his younger days, when he obtained the South African war medal and clasp, he won promotion while serving Her Majesty the Queen.

STREATER, ON AND OFF CHANGE.

“ There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness ! which, till now,
Did not belong to what I knew of life.”

—*Byron.*

IT was in the eighties, not so very long ago, when amalgamation of all the diamond mining companies was already looming in the distance. Every little company, good or bad, was doing its utmost to appear a valuable concern, in order that the highest price might be paid before it consented to be drawn into the net. Speculation in all the diamond stocks was rampant, and the “pop” of small bottles of champagne was going all day at the various bars round the Kimberley Exchange. For champagne and diamonds have been close allies in the “rough” as in other phases of civilisation, and the small bottle is recognised on the Fields as the orthodox seal of a bargain. London and Paris had entered wildly into the deal. Cables arrived in batches all day long. Stocks were rising day after day and week after week. There was no limit to what a De Beers share might eventually be worth, and the banks vied with each other in advancing cash against paper. It was a seething whirlpool of mad, gay excitement, in which many a weaker man than Streater went under. Where the wish is father to the thought, the child has a robust parent. The wish to become rich is the father of many thoughts ; as children,

sometimes indifferent honest, but always inheriting pronounced views of a sanguine nature from their parent.

The banks have learnt a lesson about overdrafts which they are not likely to forget. But in those halcyon days the favourite mode of speculation was to buy stock on time. Not that the purchaser necessarily had a tenth of the requisite capital to pay for his purchase ; but, when the time arrived for paying, the stock would have risen ten, twenty, perchance forty per cent. ; an accommodating broker would resell the stock outright for cash, and hand his client the difference ! Was a more seductive, delightful, brilliant method of acquiring wealth ever invented by wit of man ? At first Streater, who, by profession was a broker, and held severely aloof from all dealing in shares on his own behalf, kept out of it. But it became too tempting : friends around had made their thousands ; paupers of yesterday were rich men to-day.

He plunged in with the others.

One morning diamond stocks had a set back. It was only a temporary matter, every one said—a healthy reaction,—soon be all right again, these checks had occurred before. But this time recovery did not set in. The bulls were weary, according to the smart financial articles.

In this game every one counts on every one else being a bigger fool than himself ; the consequence is there are a good many left in at the finish “to nurse the baby,” as the Stock Exchange has it. Streater was one of them. A curious thing is Stock Exchange phraseology ; the more acute the crisis, the simpler and more innocent is the phrase to express it.

“Nursing the baby” in Streater’s case only meant having to pay ten times what he was worth for shares

which were depreciating daily in value, and had already fallen twenty-five per cent. below what he had purchased them at—on time.

He paid every shilling he had, and gave a promissory note for the balance. He was left a ruined man. "Stony" they called it. Streater was "stony," that was all. Men come to grief from different causes; some inherit a moral twist, others find their environment too much for them. Streater was one of the latter class. Up to the date of the great diamond gamble, Streater had not made a false step in any serious sense in the walk of life.

After a fair education at home he had come to Kimberley, and started as clerk in a broker's office. From this he had become a broker on his own account, and was liked and trusted in his profession. His mother was a widow in England, with three younger children, who were still at school; and they all adored Jack, and looked forward to the time when he would come and see them all again. "Since my husband died, Jack's been my right hand," his mother used to say with pride; and Jack had regularly remitted enough to eke out the widow's slender income.

But Jack Streater was only one of many defaulters when the crash came. Some few men had got out in time. Others had just been able to compromise matters. Some were in the clutches of the bank, who held their now depreciated scrip against enormous overdrafts; and some, like Jack, having paid all they possessed, gave promissory notes for the balance of their obligations. Up to the time of the crash in the Share Market, brokers swarmed in and around 'Change, and all found work to do; but, afterwards, a number were not only ruined

men, but could no longer find means of even making a livelihood for the future.

The old-established firms now got what work there was ; and investors, not unnaturally, preferred dealing through men who had not speculated beyond their depth, or who had confined their operations to broking. The small bottle was uncorked no more, and poverty reigned where only so recently wealth had been supreme. And be it here recorded that when the brokers and members of the Exchange had money, they had in no mean degree generosity too, and in one day subscribed among them a thousand pounds for the widow of one of their number who was left poorly off at her husband's death.

The different effect on different men of being "stony" was a study in human nature ; some seemed to care not one jot ; some were broken in health and spirit ; some cursed the cruelty of luck ; and a few there were who knew their own folly was the true cause. Amongst them are a number who are wealthy to-day on the Transvaal Gold Fields, while others still hope for their chance.

But for us let it suffice to follow Streater through the fire.

Losing his equilibrium in a moment of wild excitement, Streater had been dragged into the vortex ; and now, almost before he had time to realise the frightful peril he had exposed himself to, he found himself within a fortnight, cast up, stranded, a broken, ruined man. With a debt which he had no chance of paying, his occupation gone ; and then over the sea, there in the old country, his mother and the children ! Poor Streater ! to him they were the bitterest thought of all. For a time he lingered on in Kimberley, hoping that things would take a turn,—living from hand to mouth, and getting to hate the sight of the Exchange as if it were a hell on earth.

He could bear it no longer, the inactivity was killing him. He would go anywhere, do anything for an occupation and a living.

In this state one day, glancing listlessly through the columns of the paper, he saw an announcement that the Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles were advertising for recruits.

An open-air life and an honest living anyhow, thought Streater, was better than this everlasting loafing and waiting, and doing nothing. So he started off for the frontier, and was enlisted in the Rifles as a trooper.

Sick at heart, bitter with self-reproaches, Streater began his duties. What a blank the prospect seemed after the gorgeous dreams of a sanguine speculator! His pay now would barely suffice for himself; for that fond mother, whose mainstay he had been, the chief pride of whose life was to speak of her brave successful boy, there was nothing henceforth—nothing, but the news that he had failed, failed utterly, and sunk through his own mad folly into a slough of poverty and debt. The wretchedness of it all lay heavy upon him, and the iron entered his soul.

And Streater fell to brooding over his trouble and the hopelessness of it, till it preyed upon his mind by day, and haunted him as a horrid nightmare by night. But troopers in the Kaffrians must do their duty, be their musings what they may; and more than once, Streater, listless and indifferent to his work, got reprimanded for neglect of it. For though, to a man in a certain phase of mind, life may appear—

“A tale told by an idiot,
Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,”

yet will the outside world, for the most part vigorous

and prosaically normal, not adopt this view, and will continue in its "idiotcy" to attach much importance to the insignificant matters which make up that tale. At this time came a letter from home telling of distress in that little circle, where the mites of the widow proved all insufficient; and Streater's cup was full.

Then, already indifferent to the life around him and utterly morbid, he passed into a condition of despair. Interest in his work or the companionship of a sane man might have roused a healthy determination to overcome; but he lacked the former, and missed the latter from a reticence which, habitual to him in ordinary life, had become accentuated since his disaster. He had recently been ordered away to one of the loneliest spots where men of the Kaffrarians were stationed, where outside the small camp there was nothing but distant native kraals, and here the solitude of an isolation, which he had never known before, an isolation which sometimes drives healthy men experiencing it for the first time, mad, aggravated his mental condition to a profound melancholia, which never left him. Life seemed nought "but a pestilent congregation of vapours". Hopeless, barren, unendurable, he determined to end it. The thought had occurred to him more than once of late. Nothing beyond could be worse than this. One brief second's pain and all would be over. And one morning, as the first streak of grey crept into the east, taking his revolver from its case at his bedside, and stealing from the hut before his comrades woke, he walked over the hill to a neighbouring kloof. There, as the dawn was turning the world crimson, a sharp crack broke the stillness of the awakening day; and the rest was silence.

At tiffin that day in the officers' mess-room at the

headquarters' depot, the colonel was handed a telegram. It was sent from Camdeboo, the nearest telegraph station to the camp where poor Streater had been stationed. He read it slowly to himself first of all, then out loud for the information of the mess.

"Trooper Streater shot himself this morning—please send out doctor."

"Ah! that poor devil Streater; I always thought there was something wrong with him," said one of the officers.

"Well," said Surgeon Barkly, "I must start as soon as I can get off. It's fifty miles; and, as usual, the further the distance the vaguer the message. Whether I'm to make a post-mortem examination, or attend a surgical case, I'll defy any man to say from that telegram. A post-mortem case in one saddle bag, as many surgical instruments as I can get into another; and when I get there I shall find he's got a compound fracture of the arm or leg, and that I ought to have splints. Confound their stupidity! And I can't get an answer to a wire before starting, as the camp is ten miles from Camdeboo. I shall teach this sergeant to be more explicit next time. But he won't want a doctor for another five years. And the next accident or suicide, or whatever it is, somewhere else, will find just as big a fool to send the message, and the enlightenment of this man will avail nothing. For a monument of human folly commend me to a tome which shall contain the messages sent by mankind at large to their doctors."

And after this lengthy speech (the irritable outcome of an accumulation of similar experiences) Surgeon Barkly retired to prepare for his journey, amidst the laughter of his mess.

Barkly got off without delay, his saddle bags and

valise stuffed with all he could carry of what the infinite possibilities of the case might require ; and, after a long hot ride, arrived, pretty well tired out, late that night at the camp. The sergeant met him as he rode up, and saluted.

"Good evening, sergeant," said Barkly ; "is poor Streater dead or alive?"

"Alive, Sir," said the sergeant ; "and he's in the hut here ; but he's in a bad way, I'm afraid."

"Oh ! he is alive, is he ?" said Barkly, as he waited for his things to be removed from the saddle. He had rather looked forward to this interview with the sergeant, as he rode along in the dust ; and though, as he had said, the enlightenment of this man would probably avail nothing for the next case, still he felt it was a duty he owed his profession.

"Then, why the devil couldn't you say so in your telegram ? and why couldn't you say whether he was wounded in the head, the chest, the legs, the stomach, anywhere—anything instead of a damned silly message like that ?"

"Well, Sir, the truth is, as soon as we found him I sent off at once to report the matter to the colonel, and ask for the doctor ; and somehow I never thought of anything else, Sir."

"Think ! No, of course, you never think. Report it to the colonel," growled Barkly ; and, snatching up his instruments and some lint, which were now unpacked, he strode off to the tent where poor Streater lay.

But if Barkly was irate with the sergeant, he was gentle enough to poor Streater, whom he found with an ugly wound in his cheek and a shattered jaw. The bullet had entered near the angle of the lower jaw on one side,

fracturing it severely, and, having been apparently deflected from its course, had passed out, after dislodging some teeth through the cheek on the opposite side. It was a nasty wound, but with care and time should do all right. He purposely spoke of it to Streater as an unfortunate accident, and told him he would arrange to have him removed by easy stages in a waggon to the hospital at head quarters. Dressing it carefully, he injected some morphia; and the poor storm-tossed Streater, wracked with physical pain, passed into a quiet sleep.

Having attended to his patient, Barkly looked to his horse and himself; and sitting by the camp fire outside the hut afterwards under a clear starry sky, he heard from the sergeant the history of Streater's case.

It appeared that his comrades, missing him when they awoke, noticed that the revolver was gone, and became suspicious. On inquiry they learnt from a Kaffir that a shot had been fired in the kloof very early that morning; and on going to search they had found him just recovering consciousness, with a wound, which was bleeding freely, in his jaw, and his revolver lying beside him. They carried him back to camp, and sent post haste to head quarters.

"Yes, I noted the 'post haste'," said Barkly; "just combine a little intelligence with your 'post haste' next time."

For the post-mortem case of instruments had given his horse a sore back, and Barkly was determined that the enlightenment of that sergeant should be as complete as possible.

They got a waggon next day; and Barkly, travelling in it with his patient, arrived three days afterwards at the dépôt hospital.

Streater was two months there under treatment, pon-

dering many things. At the end of that time he had fully recovered the use of his jaw, and was reported fit for duty. He was brought before the colonel, and was examined with regard to his conduct.

One thing was clear—suicide was intended.

Now, on suicide as a crime many different views are held.

In China I believe the right to take away your own life is regarded as the privilege of any citizen who cares about exercising it, and a missionary once got into sad trouble for trying to stop a man from doing so. It appeared from the law of the country that the missionary was liable to punishment for having interfered with the liberty of the subject. In England I have known a bench of clerical magistrates send a girl who had tried to kill herself to prison. With the Chinese, civilisation is old—ages old; with us it is still young. But the Colonel took a line of his own with Streater. He was a kindly man, with half-closed, keen grey eyes, and a face as inscrutable as a sphinx. His sentence in Streater's case caused a good deal of comment; some people were strongly adverse, some approved.

He sentenced Streater to a month's revolver practice, on the ground that a man who cannot shoot himself will never hit an enemy.

A few years after this another share boom swept through South Africa. Transvaal gold shares were in demand, and brokers were busy and buoyant once more on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Amongst them Streater might be seen, very little altered, except that he wore a beard and had a few grey hairs.

The beard he wears to hide the scar of a wound he got in a fall from the Johannesburg coach when it rolled over

one day on those frightful roads near Kimberley. He is a singularly placid man for a broker, and has a large number of clients, who trust him implicitly. If you inquire why this is, you will learn from any one who knows the Exchange that Streater brokes, but he never deals.



CHRISTMAS IN THE CONQUERED TERRITORY.

IT sounded inviting : we knew our friend had a beautiful and luxurious home there, a rich man's hobby, a house which took over four years to build, was situated in wild mountain scenery, and surrounded by a million planted trees of every variety and shade of foliage, forming miles of woodland in a treeless land. It was only a day by rail and a day and a half by coach, with not more than two unbridged rivers to cross. This was nothing of a journey in a country where everything is large, from Cecil Rhodes to the Karoo. Our party was big enough to charter a special coach to Winburg ; and there our host would send his big travelling spider with four horses, to convey us the odd bit of the journey left, some fifty miles. Several other guests were going, and we knew we should have a good old orthodox Christmas in an English home, where they feared God and honoured the Queen and the Orange Free State Republic. The party would be of all ages and sizes, children included. For what is Christmas, provided the nursery accommodation be ample, without the children?

The rain had fallen, and the country was green and fresh to look upon. Travel has lost a good deal of its romance in this railway age. There's nothing very thrilling in running up to London from Edinburgh on a winter's night, rolled up in a bundle of rugs inside a railway carriage, with foot warmers and a rather close

atmosphere. It must have been a different matter in the old coaching days, with a night or so spent at some old-fashioned country inn and an occasional break-down on the road in heavy weather. In the ultimate places beyond the railways, still left here and there about the world, one gets back to this romance. Some of our friends coming across the Free State from the south got back to it when four of their six horses in a large waggonette broke away in the middle of a river where the stream was fairly strong, and plunging out on the far side, bolted into a wire fence, where one was killed and another too badly hurt to proceed. We felt it when the little bag containing the only copy of "Box and Cox," carefully provided by a versatile and talented member of the party, got jerked out somewhere on the veldt unnoticed, and an operetta was substituted on Boxing night. Mrs. Sparkins' infant felt it, when, having started at four A.M. on the last little fifty-mile stage on which were no halting places save an occasional sluit, we found all the wood, after a heavy shower, too wet to make a fire to cook the breakfast with at nine. The little dear liked her milk warm, especially after an early start; but she had a stout colonial heart, and was soon pacified, until we were able to cook a really tip-top repast at mid-day, in the shade of the spider. Mrs. Sparkins herself felt it rather acutely when the cart with the luggage, including an enormous and almost impossible trunk of that lady's, failed to turn up in time for dinner, and was spoken of encouragingly by our driver as probably stuck fast in the "Pitsyana" drift. The men of the party felt it when, after a plunge in the swimming bath (built under the Krantz) they sat down to a seven o'clock dinner, with twenty guests at the table.

The conquered territory is a strip of country on the eastern side of the Free State, separated from Basutoland by the Caledon River, and is the last piece of territory taken from the Basutos by the Free State in their great war with the wily Moshesh paramount chief. After the war, the British Government, as if in some measure to atone for the blunder they had made in 1854 in withdrawing, against the earnest wish of a large number of the pioneer settlers, from what was then the Free State Sovereignty, now, at the request of Moshesh, stepped in and annexed Basutoland. Since then the Basutos, like all other Bantu races under British supervision, have been a prosperous and rapidly increasing community. A more consistent policy in South Africa, on the lines followed in India, on the part of our Colonial Office in the past, would have spared South Africans, English and Dutch alike, much inconvenient confusion in their parochial arrangements to-day.

A fine piece of country is the conquered territory. Well-watered, at an elevation of over 5000 feet above the sea-level, it has a cool summer climate, very much like that of the Johannesburg district in the Transvaal. It is fertile; and corn is grown readily without irrigation; and when tapped by the grain line, shortly to be constructed, it will become much more thickly populated. In this rapidly-rising district is situated our host's home, Prynnsberg. The house stands under a precipitous weather-beaten krantz or cliff, and looks down over a wide grass-covered amphitheatre, surrounded by the everlasting hills. From the foot of a beautiful flowering garden runs a green stretch of woods and plantations for some miles out into the natural amphitheatre. From beside shaded pools, half hidden in the undergrowth,

peep out the images of sculptured nymphs and fauns, while over all is that magnificent expanse of soft, clear blue sky, which Greece might envy. Here, in a naturally treeless country, firs, poplars, oaks, gum-trees, ash, and the broom (*Planta genista*), all grow in luxurious abundance—a living monument to energy, enterprise, and patriotism: if loyalty to the land which gives a man wealth, and the reinvestment of that wealth in the development and civilisation of that land, be patriotism. Zebra and antelope wander in the glades, while from the trees come alternately the harsh cry of the guinea-fowl and the gentle cooing of the turtle-dove. The brilliant plumaged honey sucker flashes from flower to flower in the sunshine of the garden. Overhead, above the trees, against the sky, that noblest of his kind, the blue rock pigeon cuts his swift way from krantz to krantz. From the cliffs behind the house, away to the east, over the nearer hills and beyond the valley of the Caledon River, distant a day's journey into Basutoland, run in a long broken line the serried peaks and rugged outlines of the Maluti mountains. In these mountains, which tower into the sky, are peaks over 10,000 feet; notably the Mount Aux Sources, away to the north-east, where rise the Orange, the Tugela, and some of the upper tributaries of the Vaal. They are a grand line of mountains; and, running parallel, as they do, at only a short distance to the main line of the Drakensburg, form the greatest mass, and contain the highest peaks anywhere south of the Zambesi. The name Double Mountains has arisen from this peculiar formation.

On the slopes of these mountains, and in the fertile low country between them and the Caledon River, the Basutos dwell; perhaps the most intelligent tribe of all

the great Kaffir or Bantu race. From Prynnsberg to the nearest ford on the Caledon River is about an hour and a half's ride ; and two of us started, with a native guide, early one morning, mounted on Basuto ponies, to pay a visit to Basutoland. We got some breakfast at the drift, and finding the river was too high to ride through, we crossed in a boat belonging to a hospitable store keeper, and had our horses swum across. The Basutos have a plan of their own for making horses swim through, which is very effectual. The saddles are taken off and put in the boat, the bridles tied up short, and the horses driven in where the bank is fairly steep, so that they at once get into deep water. A horse is thus obliged to begin swimming ; and the Basutos, armed with stones and sticks, throw first one side of the horse, and then the other, till he is well started on his course ; his head once fairly turned to a landing place on the other bank, he generally goes through without more ado. A horse unencumbered in this way can swim pretty comfortably through a strong current, and take good care of himself ; while, with a man on his back or hanging to his mane, trying to steer with the bridle, he is much more liable to become embarrassed and get carried down stream. Our ponies being to the manner born, swam through and selected a good landing place, keeping pretty close together all the way. The narrow, high-banked rivers and streams are dangerous to cross when flooded, and many a time both horse and rider have been carried away and drowned. The water comes down so suddenly after a storm, that waggon and oxen caught in the act of crossing are sometimes swept away.

By good luck we fell in with a trader at the drift, proceeding to his station at the foot of the Maluti

mountains. It was situated close to one of the native villages, under its own headman, or, as the natives have learnt under British rule to call him, Captain. With characteristic pioneer hospitality, the trader, Mr. Dawson, asked us to pay him a visit, promising us accommodation for man and horse, and an introduction to Peete Ramaneli, the village captain. As this afforded us an opportunity of seeing both the native life and magnificent mountain scenery of the country, we gladly accepted his offer. From the river, right away to the mountains, we passed through the middle of lands under cultivation bearing mealies and Kaffir corn, with here and there a patch of tobacco plant. In every field the women were hard at work hoeing; and the whole country seemed alive with natives. It is, I suppose without exception, the most thickly populated portion of South Africa. Even in this so-called low country, some five to six thousand feet above the sea-level by the by, the land is hilly and broken, with numerous stone-capped hills and rocky krantzes; and, as we neared the mountains, the country became more and more broken up into steep hills and valleys. Below the krantzes and on the hills were dotted little clumps of native huts, neatly built and thatched, each with its scherm or roofless ante-room of reeds bound closely together. This little enclosure, originally built by the various Bantu tribes as a protection against lions, is still retained by the Basutos, as it makes a very convenient outer chamber in fine weather, giving shelter from the wind and shade from the sun, and at the same time having, what the hut itself has not, the advantage of free ventilation. At present, the whole of the land in Basutoland is held and occupied by the natives; no Englishman or Boer being allowed to possess a farm. The

various chiefs have nominally a petty jurisdiction under the executive officers of the British Government—actually they are the principal powers in the land. The feuds which continually exist between them are our greatest security; though, as these feuds not infrequently lead to actual petty warfare and bloodshed, demanding intervention of the authorities, the life of a Basutoland Magistrate or Commissioner cannot be at all times a happy one. After some three or four hours' riding through the lands and cattle of the Basutos, we at length reached our friend's home, situated on a flat-topped hill, and divided, by only a steep valley with a rushing stream at the bottom, from the actual slopes of the Malutis, which rose Alp-like before us.

After a few hours' rest we repaired, armed with a blanket of gorgeous hue, to pay a visit to Peete Ramanelli. The village stood on the eastern extremity of the hill, was surrounded on three sides by precipitous krantzes, leading down to the gorge beneath, and was further fortified by a low stone wall running all round it. The huts were built in a circle inside the wall, while the chief's hut, with those set apart for his wives and the eldest son of the chief wife, were placed more towards the centre of the enclosure. The village, thus strongly fortified, was held successfully against another native chief, Masupa by name, who only two years ago attacked it with guns and assegais in very superior numbers. In a small impromptu dance among a few of the men which we witnessed that evening, some of the heroic deeds of that campaign were duly chanted. I believe some half dozen men were killed before Masupa withdrew his forces. This is only one of the numerous similar little affairs which serve to disturb the harmony

of a Basutoland Magistrate's life. We found Peete Ramanelli suffering from a severe attack of gout, and looking decidedly puffy and asthmatic in an old Tam o' Shanter cap, reclining on some skins in the small porch of his hut, and being attended on by one of his younger wives. Some chairs and native beer were produced, and with the aid of our servant, who could speak Dutch as well as Basutu, we entered into conversation. Gout and its remedies was a subject of deep interest to Peete at the moment; and it was only on my promising to send something for it through Dawson, that we could get him on to other topics. We asked permission to look round the village, which he granted, after saying it was not as large as it might be, but one easy to defend against gun and assegai. The chief wife was a fine-looking woman about forty years of age, and was a daughter of Letsea, the late paramount chief of the Basutos. She had an oval face with an almost aquiline nose, quite distinct from the ordinary Bantu type; and I am told that the whole of this family from Moshesh downwards, have the same strongly marked features. There can, I think, be little doubt that in this, as in many other of the Bantu chiefs' families, there is a pure Arab strain. The eldest son of this woman, Mitchell, as he is called and the heir to Peete, has a really handsome Arab countenance. Mitchell is fairly well educated, but a Kaffir at heart. He is a young fellow and just married to his first wife, which he now says is the only one he means to have. He was very proud of her, and particularly desired us to come and see her. She was the daughter of a neighbouring headman, and had cost him forty head of cattle; he mentioned her price, and then asked us what we

thought of the lady. I told him I thought she was well worth fifty head, which he repeated with great delight to her and his mother. The Basutos are clean and neat in their household arrangements, and their huts much more habitable than those of most of the Kaffirs. The French Protestant missionaries have several stations in the country, where their schools are well attended. Our guide in the village was by way of being an educated Basuto, and some of his English expressions were quaint, bearing distinct trace of their missionary origin. He pointed out a villanous looking individual among the older men, and informed us that "he was very wrath". Feeling uneasy at this news, we inquired the cause, when our guide explained that he meant "he was quick to strike". We were afterwards interested to learn from Mr. Dawson that the conduct of the "wrath" man was at that very moment undergoing consideration by a neighbouring Chief and a British Magistrate. It appeared that a short time before, a party of Basutos had come down a long journey over the mountains to Dawson's store, riding on ponies, and bringing several other pack ponies loaded with corn and wool, which they were glad to barter at the store. He of the wrath and a few select friends having a taste, which is pretty prevalent among the Basutos, for horseflesh, seized one of the strangers' ponies one night and killed it, carrying off the meat. This little misdemeanour having been brought home to the delinquents, reparation and punishment were demanded by the mountain party, who were clearly of opinion that wrath, even when constitutional, was not entitled to be appeased at the expense of other men's horseflesh.

That evening, over a pipe outside in the moonlight, we had graphic descriptions from Mr. Dawson of the scenery in the heart of the mountains, which is grand and rugged in the extreme. The Malutsinyani, which after the rain is a large torrent, falls over a cliff in a sheer descent of six hundred and thirty feet. Many of the gorges, which have but little herbage and are strewn with fallen rocks, are the very picture of desolation.

Originally, very few natives lived in the mountains, but under the comparatively peaceful rule of the British Government, population has increased so rapidly in the country that they have been obliged to take up every available piece of valley and mountain slope where corn can find root, or stock herbage. No waggon or other vehicle can penetrate to these mountain fastnesses; and the natives bring their wool, hides, and corn, sometimes for two or three days on the backs of ponies, before they can reach a store. In fact, an old trader and hunter informed us that he had visited some kraals in the mountains where they had never seen a white man.

We made an early start that morning, and met several parties of women on their way to the lands to hoe. Some of the men, too, were to be seen at this hour busy milking the cows. We reached the Caledon after four hours' riding, but found it still very full. Lerufa, our boy, was mounted on a high upstanding horse, and said he would try the drift. Before he was more than half way through, the water rose within a few inches of the horse's withers, and finally swept in a good strong current over his back. The horse was half swimming and half walking, and very nearly rolled over. Lerufa managed to remain upon the horse's back; but it was touch and go, we were relieved when both landed safely on the other side. We

decided in favour of allowing our horses to swim through unencumbered with riders, and made for the boat a little distance up stream. In describing his feeling afterwards in Dutch, Lerufa confessed to having been very unhappy for a few minutes, and said that when the water came over the horse's back and wetted that portion of him which was in closest proximity to the saddle he said to himself, "Ah, me! now in a few minutes shall I be dead." He had a pair of gaiters of mine tucked under his arm which I made sure were gone, but he stuck to them most pluckily. A Kaffir has a chivalrous sense of honour about trifles that are in his special care, and will often run any personal risk rather than lose a parcel or a letter entrusted to him by a white man. We off saddled, and hung Lerufa out to dry; after breakfast we got back to Prynnsburg, where the smart section of Basutoland Officialdom and Free State Squirearchy were to assemble that evening for a fancy dress ball. But it all came to an end in time, as good things do. Every frock in Mrs. Sparkins' big trunk had had its turn. All the verses that all the men had been unable to remember properly had been inserted in various ladies' albums. The mistletoe had been taken down by somebody's order. The old year had gone, though, owing to a discrepancy in the times recorded by different watches, no one knew exactly when; and the matter was only finally adjusted by seeing it out on three separate occasions at short intervals, which so confused Sparkins that in a short speech he insisted on making, with tears in his eyes, he wished everyone God-speed during 1901. The waggonettes were loaded up once more, and we left Prynnsburg and the rugged blue line of the far Malutis behind us.

OVER THE KATBERG IN A ONE- HORSE SHAY.

ONE advantage freely claimed for colonial life over that of older civilisation is that a greater freedom from old-world prejudices of all sorts and descriptions is found.

That some of these old-world prejudices are not without merit, is a proposition I have occasionally heard maintained by members of the fairer sex, who have not had the advantage of being born in this freer atmosphere. But whether the proposition be true or not, prejudices as fond and foolish as any to be found in English life flourish in this enlightened colony. Among these is the invariable custom of invading one's bedroom, somewhere between four and seven o'clock, with an inordinately large cup of coffee. The intruder is usually a native, whose diabolical delight in the office is frequently evinced by the grin on his face.

That there is no necessity for you to appear upon the scene before half-past eight or nine o'clock does not prevent your hostess from ordering this delicate attention, unless you have had the foresight to mention the subject the night before. In hotels (another prejudice, by the by), some half-hour or so before daylight is the favourite time.

That a bullock waggon should be drawn by sixteen oxen is almost a maxim. It is true that a "kurveyor," if he have half a load, will sometimes take only fourteen ;

but a troubled consciousness that, in leaving out the eighth pair he is not doing the square thing, is, I believe, usually present.

Few Cape farmers of the old colonial stock will ride a mare ; though in the land where horsemanship, with all its attendant sports, is the most highly prized luxury of the wealthy—and men are as fastidious about their horses as about their wives—hundreds of guineas are paid for mares used for riding only.

“Who-whoop ! they have him—they’re round him ; how
They worry and tear when he’s down !
’Twas a stout hill-fox when they found him ; now
’Tis a hundred tatters of brown !
And the riders arriving as best they can,
In panting plight, declare
That—‘ First in the van was the old grey man
Who stands by his old grey mare ’.”

With the present generation the prejudice against mares is perhaps on the wane, though your South African of to-day still has a preference for a “rij-paard,” which is not a mare.

But whatever falling away from grace or laxity of view may be creeping into the minds of the present generation with regard to the merits of mares, on one point in connection with horses opinion remains stiff. However small your buggy, however slight your spider, never attempt to drive it with one horse—at least, for any distance into the country—even though that horse should combine with the breed of a Blair Athol the bone and muscle of a Suffolk punch.

Now, to the morning coffee ; although I never drink it, I have always submitted with a good grace. With regard to the eighth pair of bullocks, although I have

occasionally had doubts in my mind on the subject, I conclude the kurveyor knows his own business best. And in reference to the prejudice against mares, as in country districts they are obtainable at a cheaper rate than horses of no better quality, I have no objection to raise. But possessing, as I do, one, and only one, good horse—and when I say a good horse, I mean an animal that would pass as such in England, standing as he does nearly sixteen hands high, deep in the girth, short in the back, and with plenty of bone and muscle—I object to be told that I must not, if I wish it, attempt to drive him alone a journey in the country. “It’s all very well driving about the town; but when you come to a long journey over these Cape roads, you’ll find he’ll soon knock up.” “Well,” I said, “I am going to drive him in a spider, and take my wife with me, a journey of 150 miles; and I intend to go over the Katberg.”

My friend, an up-country farmer, who thought a touch of the sjambok the best corrective for neglect of work in a Kaffir servant, who always took his coffee (*zwart*) at five, and never rode a mare, laughed sardonically. “I am not anxious,” I said, “to do anything foolish; but the scheme seems to me feasible enough. You would, I suppose, have no hesitation in making the journey with three people in a Cape cart, and a pair of ordinary small Cape horses in breast harness?”

“Oh! you would do it all right with a pair.”

“But one large horse with a collar in a light spider, and only two people, is as good as the other arrangement—isn’t it?” However, it was no use.

My beautiful calculations about the superiority of the collar over breast harness, the strength of Midnight, my horse, and the lightness of the spider—were all received

with a shake of the head. From all sides, nothing but discouragement. It seemed like flying in the face of Providence. I began to wonder whether there was anything in the Scriptures about never driving less than a pair. But my leave was obtained ; the horse looked fitter than ever ; and, with a half guilty feeling at my own doggedness, we started on our journey.

Mid-day on the Thursday before Christmas found us at a small roadside hotel, near the foot of the mountain on the north side.

We had intended to go on that afternoon ; but a cold drizzling rain and thick dense clouds, which we should have to penetrate, rolling along the mountain side, decided us to wait until next day. I was the more willing to start with the whole day before us, as the reports I had had of the state of the road were far from encouraging. A friend, who knew the road well, having failed to dissuade me from going with one horse, did his best to persuade me to have a pair of bullocks for ascending, as the road, though not very steep, was very much cut up and out of repair.

I declined this proffered aid, as I had no pole to my spider, and feared that a pair of oxen driven tandem might prove awkward at the corners. During the afternoon the drizzle increased to a steady rain. On Friday morning, having rained all night, it poured. The Fates—wrath at this one-horse attempt—seemed dead against us. The day was Christmas Eve. The resources of the establishment, at which we had already spent nearly twenty-four hours, were limited to one small sitting-room looking on to the stable door, and a diminutive stoep without a roof. To remain over Christmas was not a cheerful prospect. To return was ignominy ; to go on

seemed rash. Towards the middle of the day the wind began to blow bitterly cold for the time of the year ; but the rain somewhat abated, and the proverbial piece of blue sky, from which a sailor's suit might be made, was visible. The cloud cleared slightly from the mountain. We decided on a start ; resolving to return if the weather got too bad or we found the mist too thick. Inspanned, the horse stood shivering in the cutting wind. We hoisted the spider's hood, and being well supplied with rug and ulsters we started in tolerable comfort. A quarter of a mile of bad road brought us to a spot where it began to get much worse. Places covered with projecting pieces of the bare rocks, boulders, and fragments of all shapes and sizes, alternated with sluits and gulleys full of deep loose sand ; while here and there the road was the bed of a rushing torrent.

Ridges, sluits, holes, boulders, ruts, constituted a road the sight of which would have caused to stand on end the hairs of an English turnpike-keeper's head. The mist thickened. The rain returned in full force. Midnight, justifying the confidence in his powers, took the ascents pluckily. The spider, now crawling with one wheel over a boulder, now dropping another into a yawning hole, seemed to walk up the rugged road like a cat. An hour passed, and still slowly but steadily we ascended. According to my calculations, though neither of us had travelled the road before, we must be half way up. The cutting wind and driving rain kept steadily on. Our landlord had informed us that on the top of the mountain was an old deserted toll-house, at or near which he thought we should find a road party encamped.

We continued to ascend. As we got higher, the

mountain slopes grew steeper ; and the road, no longer winding up the face, was cut from the mountain side. On one hand was the hewn rock ; on the other, covering unknown depths, rolled the ever thickening mist. Still, as far as we could see, some six yards, the road rose ahead of us—the top could not be far. At length, a level stretch—this must surely be the summit ; but a few yards and again the road rose up in front. Even the horse seemed disappointed ; but, after a short space for breathing, he toiled once more up the last long stretch, and the summit was fairly reached.

Just before this point the road, to my dismay, divided. We took what seemed the main branch. Then followed the worst piece of road in the whole journey.

So deep and full of boulders were some of the sluits crossing the road that I thought the spider must come in two. But, with that wonderful elasticity which characterises this vehicle, it crawled through a wheel and a half at a time, none the worse for the effort. Had a bolt gone, replacing it in that cold driving mist would have been an almost impossible feat. We afterwards learnt that the branch which we did not take was now the road used ; the bit we travelled over being very properly regarded as impassable.

Once on the top we seemed to be on a sort of plateau ; the road widened indefinitely, and the mist grew so thick we could see but a few yards beyond the horse's head. A short distance brought us to a large sheet of water stretching the whole breadth of the road. Over it the fog hung like a pall. What holes it might cover, or how far it extended, were matters of conjecture.

We hoped the toll-house was not far, and drove through. Fortunately, the water was not deep ; and

some fifty yards brought us to the other side. After this spot the course of the road became so indistinct that driving off the edge of the mountain into space seemed a very possible contingency. I got out and explored on foot, picking out the track as well as I could; my wife driving the now somewhat tired horse after me. The possibility of having taken the wrong road was in my mind, and I looked out anxiously for the toll-house. From stones and boulders we had now got on to black slippery mud, and we began slowly to descend. The road wound about; the descent grew steeper. I got into the spider again, and was very thankful I had a good strong brake.

Still no toll-house. Had we passed it in the mist? Might we not pass Theron's—the hotel to which we were bound—in the same way? The descent grew very steep, and steeper than anything we had come up. With the brake full on, the spider slid forward in the mud on to the horse's haunches. Sharp corners, with no coping, and nothing but the everlasting mist on the outer side, came upon us without a moment's warning in the dense impenetrable atmosphere.

Suddenly, after we had abandoned all hope of the toll-house, like a ghost there loomed up right abreast of us what in the mist seemed a huge building, but in reality proved to be a small ruined hut. Mark Twain and his friends, lost and repentant on the mountain, were not more jubilant at finding themselves after the storm encamped in the very shadow of their hotel, than we at the sight of this ruined hut. This, which had been casually described to us as “on the top,” was evidently the old toll-house. Of the road party which were here or hereabouts no sign appeared. I got down and entered. From a hole in the

roof the rain streamed on the bare floor of the small room. Not a vestige of anything save mud and water. Off this opened another small chamber, in all respects like to the first, save for a huddled mass of old sacks which I could dimly discern in the corner. Closer inspection proved the old sacks to be a half-clad Kaffir, rolled up in a torn blanket. He seemed half, if not quite, dead. I shook him by the shoulder, without any result. Another shake, and he moved slightly. With great difficulty he finally got upon his legs.

Caught in the storm the day before, he had lain there for twenty-four hours. So benumbed was he, he could scarcely walk across the room without assistance. Our pleasure at meeting was mutual. From him I learnt that the worst part of our journey was over; and he gladly took my offer of a seat in the back of the spider. I was still in some dread of passing Theron's in the mist, and now we had a guide. He protested, and I think rightly, that without our succour he would have perished that night; but duly called for payment as guide the next morning.

Just as our troubles seemed well nigh over, and we grew jocular over our adventures, an incident occurred which might have left us to share the fate of the half-starved Kaffir. We had brought a bundle of forage for the horse, which I had intended to give him at the toll-house. It was still bitterly cold, and the rain coming down in torrents. To outspan seemed a farce, more especially as inspanning with half-numbed hands would have been difficult. I turned the spider with its back to the driving rain, and, with too much confidence in the quietness of the old horse, removed the headstall. He turned his head and blinkers to enable him to eat the

forage. He snorted somewhat uneasily, but began to eat. In a few minutes he stood still, shivering.

I advanced towards him, and raised the headstall. He turned his head, the wheel moved slightly, and, thoroughly frightened, he plunged forward. I had hold of the "riem," which was fastened to his halter, and did my best to stop him. It was no use. Snorting and terrified he tore along the road, dragging me with him, and approaching nearer every moment to the edge of the road and that rolling cloud of mist beyond it, covering I knew not what. I hung on with all my weight; still we got nearer at every step to what looked like the edge of the world. A few steps more and he must go over. No one was in the spider. If he must go, he should go to destruction alone. There were yet a few feet left. Desperate and savage at my own folly for removing the blinkers, I seized him by the nose, and plunged my fingers deep into his nostrils. This checked him for a moment; and I got my other arm round his head. We were within a foot of the brink. He stood and trembled like a leaf. I soothed him with my voice as well as I could, and gradually slipped the headstall over his head. I led him still trembling back into the road, and breathed freely once more. I had left my wife administering sandwiches to the Kaffir in the hut. On turning round I found her, standing within a few yards of me, pale and silent as a ghost. "I made sure you would both go over," she said; "no one else would have held on like that." I duly discounted the latter portion of the speech, and we prepared to continue our journey. Our Kaffir friend, although he had found sufficient vigour to demolish most of the sandwiches, was too benumbed to get into the spider unaided, and I had to lift him as

best I could into the little back seat, where, after several times nearly rolling out, he managed to remain till we reached our destination.

From the toll-house we drove, with the aid of the brake, at a pretty fair pace down the steep muddy road, and soon found ourselves entering one of those magnificent forests which cover the southern slopes of the mountain. On one side the trees rose towering above us; on the other, we could often see nothing but their tops peering out from the mist. From the cold of the bleak bare uplands we had just left, the warm shelter of the forest was a delightful change. The mist cleared as we got down; and, at length far below us, from a turn in the road, we descried the hotel. What the scenery was above this point, the dense curtain of cloud had concealed from us. Here, beneath the storm-driven cloudy canopy, it was splendid. The slopes are clad with magnificent forest trees; the undergrowth is a mass of beautiful ferns and flowers. The road is cut in places from the face of the cliff, and crosses by short bridges numerous deep ravines and kloofs. On the slopes and in the gorges was one continuous sound of rushing, falling water. Every rivulet was a boiling torrent; every fissure poured forth its stream; while from all the overhanging edges the water dripped.

Wet to the skin, tired, and hungry, we at length, to the utter astonishment of Madame Theron, drew up in front of her comfortable, commodious, accommodation house. The remainder of the journey, though less adventurous, was perhaps more enjoyable, and was duly accomplished in the "One-Horse Shay".

A DAY WITH THE SNEDDEN.

[Dedicated to the President, Stewards, and members of the Snedden Coursing Club.]

WE will rise with the morn,
Both the gay and forlorn,
A bright day with the Snedden to spend :
To the dogs with dull care,
We'll have sport good and rare,
And we'll see it out till the day end.

From the farm and the town
Let us jog along down
To the meet by the thorns in the vale ;
Come on horse or in cart,
With firm seat and light heart,
Though your steed must be sure, swift, and hale.

What a day for the plain,
A clear sky and no rain,
The air full of what poets call " balm,"
Then sit tight, one and all,
Gallop hard, fear no fall,
If holes yawn, trust your horse and be calm.

Good old Tim in the van,
(A no longer light man,)
With two mounts and three gallons of ale,
Vows to ride all he knows
When the cry " There he goes !"
Rings out blithely across the wide vale.

" There he goes ! " Magic shout,
All the field's in a rout,
Heading forward the buck as he rose
From the leash, straining hounds
Swiftly leap with mad bounds,
" There he goes ! " " Tally ho ! " " There he goes ! "

Bustle on as ye can—
Every horse, hound, and man,
For the buck sweeps along like the wind.
If he gain the far crest .
Of yon hill to the west,
He'll leave hunters, hounds, cattle, behind.

But the hounds, neck and neck,
 Are up with him, and check
 His straight course as he heads for the hill ;
 Now he turns oft and fast,
 But they have him at last,
 And the brindled bitch wins with a kill.

Bucks in plenty were there,
 Sport we've had good and rare ;
 Let us homewards while yet there is light ;
 And the Snedden Club good,
 Let us thank as we should,
 For to give thanks where due is but right.

Then to sportsmen all round
 Wheresoe'er they be found,
 Let us drink as we rest round the fire,
 Talking o'er the glad sport
 With Cape dop or old port,
 May they find game to their hearts' desire !

TO THE SPRINGBUCK.

IN graceful gambols,
 Afar he rambles,
 Leaping, laughing,
 Foes he disdains.
 In troops he ranges,
 His swift course changes
 Roaming at will,
 Buck of the plains !

O'er the rolling slope
 Sweeps the antelope,
 Swift as a bird
 When flight he feigns.
 The tired hound beat
 Finds him all too fleet
 Roaming ever
 Buck of the plains !

Nor hunter, nor hound,
 On his native ground
 Wide as a sea,
 To him ere gains.
 In splendid gambols
 A King he rambles,
 Roving ever
 Buck of the plains !

